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CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENCY IN PUBLIC
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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Final Report of Project S-212

Cooperative Research Branch

U. S. Office of Education

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THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Part I

The History of City School Administration from Its Beginning to 1900 with Special Emphasis on the Superintendent of Schools

1. Introduction

I think that anyone who is familiar with the American public schools will agree that at the present time the superintendent of schools is the most crucial person in any school system. This is so because he, more than any other single individual, is in a position to influence the quality of education that each child receives. He either appoints and promotes teachers directly or he chooses the person who does. He is usually the only professional educator who sits with the school board and he represents the schools before the public. Within the school system, he, more than anyone else, influences the climate in which teaching and learning must go on. The principal of a school has, of course, a great deal to do with the quality of work done in a particular school and this is true especially if he has the power to hire teachers. Still, he is always subordinate to the superintendent and the school board. So if a community has an able, well-qualified person in this key job and if it has the financial resources, it has a good chance of having excellent schools. On the other hand, if a school district has an incompetent, or just as bad, a mediocre superintendent, it is almost impossible, regardless of the financial situation, to have excellent schools.

It is clear, of course, and I think that the data presented in this study will make it even clearer, that, because of the institutional setting

in which he has to work, the superintendent of schools is by no means omnipotent. He comes close to being all-powerful vis-à-vis his teachers and the other members of his staff (especially where he has the solid backing of his school board) everywhere except in the few city school systems where teachers are strongly organized and have won the right to bargain directly with the school board. But as he faces the school board and the community, the situation is quite different. He is hired and can be fired by the board so he always has to be circumspect in his behavior toward them. He is also extremely vulnerable to the press and to pressure groups in the community. Finally, he can be and usually is severely limited because of our inadequate financial arrangements for supporting our schools. So, his condition is one of power as regards the teachers and one of weakness so far as the school board and the community are concerned. Nevertheless, despite the weakness of some aspects of his position, he is still the most important person in any school system in terms of potential for influencing the quality of work that goes on in the schools. And I think this would be true regardless of the size of the school district. I stated earlier that this condition prevails at the present time because it is conceivable that as teacher organizations grow in strength the power of the superintendent will be curtailed accordingly. But at this point in time his office is the most potent in public education.

And this crucial importance of the job is not a recent development. Horace Mann in his Annual Report for 1843 had given the Prussian school-inspectors a large measure of credit for the high quality of education which had been developed in that country. After comparing these officials

with the deputy superintendents appointed for each county in the state of New York, he stated that "It is easy to see how efficient such a class of officers must have been in bringing up teachers to a high standard of qualifications at the beginning: and in creating, at last, a self-inspired, self-improving spirit, among them."

As the years passed and public education developed the office became more important and there is abundant evidence that this was so. Perhaps the most impressive testimonial on this point was provided by Joseph Mayer Rice in 1892. Rice was trained as a physician and went to Germany in the 1880's for additional study. While there, he got interested in education, took some work in pedagogy, and visited in the schools. He maintained this interest in education upon his return to the United States and in 1892 made an extensive, systematic study of the public schools. Between early in January and late in June of 1892, Rice observed more than twelve hundred teachers in schools in thirty-six cities. On the basis of this experience he made the following judgments about the superintendents of schools:

The office of superintendent is, in my opinion, one the importance of which cannot be overestimated. Indeed, in the study of the educational conditions in any given locality, the superintendent may be regarded as the central figure,--as a careful consideration of what he is, what he does, as well as the circumstances under which he labors, will scarcely fail to point out the reasons why the schools of that locality are on a comparatively high or low level. When he is a thorough educator,--that is, when he has made a profound study of the science,--spares no pains in instructing his teachers in educational methods and principles, and is fully sustained in his actions by the board of education, the schools in his charge, if there be not too many, improve rapidly and ever continue to advance. But a modification of any one of these conditions impedes the progress of the schools...

But even when the superintendent labors under very unfavorable conditions, he seldom fails to stamp the schools

with his individual pedagogical ideas, thus giving the education in his schools at least a tendency in a certain direction, provided he remains long enough--say four or five years--in any one city. As a rule, however, superintendents do not remain long in any one place, and this is particularly true of the smaller cities. They frequently, for political or other reasons, fail to be reappointed, or they accept other positions by reason of higher salaries. Superintendents of small cities not uncommonly go from one locality to another for a consideration of one or two hundred dollars per annum. By reason of these changes the schools of many cities are always in a transitional stage, never reaching any distinctive character.¹

These statements by Rice not only provide evidence of the importance of the job, they also point up aspects of the situation which were vital in influencing the quality of education then, and which I will contend have been vital until right down to the present time. What were the factors which determined whether the schools were good or bad? First, the educational qualifications of the superintendent ("when he is a thorough educator"); second, his conception of his role ("when he spares no pains in instructing his teachers"); third, his relations with the board of education ("when he is fully sustained in his actions by the board"); and fourth and last, his tenure of office ("when he remains long enough--say four or five years--to give the school a distinctive character"). There are, as I will show, other problems connected with the superintendency, but these four identified by Rice have been so continuously basic that a large part of this study will be developed around them.

There is ample evidence to support Joseph Rice's opinion regarding the importance of the superintendency. For example, writing in 1894, Burke A. Hinsdale stated that the superintendents were "as influential

1. The Public School System of the United States, (New York, 1893), pp. 11, 12, 13.

as they are numerous" and that "far beyond any other class of persons of equal numbers, the superintendents directly shape the schools public education."² Hinsdale was a qualified witness. A prominent author and lecturer, he had been president of Hiram College (1870-1882), superintendent of schools in Cleveland (1882-1888), and finally professor of education at the University of Michigan. Prominent in the National Education Association, he was elected president of its elite group, the National Council of Education in 1897.

In 1898 another prominent educator, Charles F. Thwing, writing on the "new profession," stated that the superintendents of schools in many cities and towns were "rendering a service to the people far greater than that which any other citizen is rendering!"³ So far as the school system was concerned the superintendent, he said, was not only its head but also its "heart, fingers and feet."⁴ Thwing, a Harvard graduate, was president of Western Reserve University from 1890 to 1920 and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching from 1905 to 1921.

It would be possible to cite numerous other sources to substantiate the claim that by the turn of the century the job of superintendent of schools had become a crucial one in American public education. And, writing in 1908, two prominent educators predicted that the future of American education would depend largely on the men who held the office.⁵ I think

2. "The American School Superintendent", Educational Review, Vol. VII, (January), p. 42.

3. "A New Profession", IBID., Vol. XV (January), p. 30.

4. IBID., p. 26.

5. Samuel T. Dutton & David Snedden, The Administration of Public Education in the United States, (New York, 1908), p. 231.

that the evidence will show that this prediction was a sound one. So it seems obvious that the position with all the problems surrounding it deserves careful study and analysis.

* * * * *

I began my research on school administration and school administrators in 1956. I was concerned then to discover how and why, by 1925, the superintendent of schools was being trained as and was behaving on the job in a fashion which closely resembled a manager or executive in a business or industrial concern. This development did seem rather strange in an office that was supposed to be educational in nature. The story of that development was published in 1962 under the title Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools. My major conclusion was that because of the weakness of his position in relation to the school board and the community, the superintendent of schools was extremely vulnerable to outside pressure and that in order to survive he had to bow and scrape and please his masters. America in 1925 was a business society. Americans wanted their schools run in a businesslike way. It was natural for them to expect the head of the school system to behave in a businesslike way. And we have evidence that many school administrators enjoyed assuming the role of the "school executive."

I have stated that I think that these developments were most unfortunate and even tragic for American education, and I have given my reasons for this judgment in the last chapter of Education and the Cult of Efficiency. But aside from the consequences, the study raised a number of important questions that need to be answered. What was the situation in American

education and especially in educational administration before 1900 or before the efficiency cult was imposed upon or adopted by school administrators? Even a cursory look at the leaders indicated that great changes had occurred. Compare the published writing and speaking of men prominent in educational administration prior to 1900 such as William Torrey Harris or William Maxwell or Burke A. Hinsdale with their counterparts twenty-five years later--men such as Frank Spaulding or William McAndrew or Ellwood Cubberley. It is clear that there were significant changes. So in the first phase of this research I want to analyze and describe the situation in educational administration from its beginning (roughly 1840) up to 1900. Then, drawing heavily on the Cult of Efficiency and all the data that I gathered for that study but did not use, I will trace the changes in educational administration, and especially those in the superintendency, up to 1929.

But the really important part of the story is what has happened to school administration, and especially to the superintendency, since 1929. It was in order to get some notion of the broad outlines of development both before 1900 and since 1929 that I applied for a Small Contract Research Grant from the U.S. Office of Education. In that preliminary sketch I worked on a survey of the changing conceptions of the superintendency from 1865 to 1965. I knew that the conception had changed after 1900 and I was reasonably certain, just from my knowledge of the history of education generally, that it had changed since then. It appears, on the basis of the data that I have gathered so far, that there were two major shifts (which overlap of course) after 1929. One, which reached its peak in the late forties and remained a potent notion until 1954, can be described as a shift from the conception of the superintendent as a business-managerial executive type over to a conception of him as an educational statesman in

a democratic school. The great leader in this change was Jesse Newlon, formerly superintendent of schools at Denver and during the thirties both a professor at Teachers College, Columbia, and editor of the School Executive. The second change in the conception of the superintendency after 1929 begins after 1945 and is prominent after 1954. In this period I have described him as a combination applied social scientist and educational realist.

I had planned to turn in this preliminary survey of the changing conceptions of the superintendency as the final report. The report was divided into four major sections which were as follows:

1. The period from 1865 to 1910 in which the superintendent was seen, and saw himself, as a scholar-educator type--an educational leader and a teacher of teachers.
2. The period from 1910 to 1929 in which the superintendent was seen, and saw himself, as a combination business manager-school executive type.
3. The period from 1929 to 1954 in which the superintendent was seen, and saw himself, as an educational statesman in a democratic school.
4. The period from 1954 to 1966 in which the superintendent was seen, and saw himself, as a combination applied social scientist and educational realist.

This analysis is based (except for the second part which I have studied extensively) upon an examination of: 1. the writings of the most prominent men in each period, and 2. the most important national journals in school administration. The last two parts of this report will be in this preliminary, tentative form. I think that what I have presented in these sections is solidly factual (as the documentation will show) and that my analysis

is correct. But it is not the whole story. Because I had time and because I had research assistance, I went back to the early period (before 1900) and began an intensive analysis of all the relevant data I could find. I think now that I have all the data I need to describe the developments in school administration in that period in detail. The result will be that the first part of this report will range far beyond the conception of the superintendency held in this period and will include a description and analysis of most of the important aspects of the developments in school administration (still, however, concentrating on the superintendency) in this period. The result is that the first section is not a preliminary sketch but a rather extensive analysis of the four main themes mentioned above. I intend to treat the subsequent periods in the same way in the next year and I hope at the end to produce a solid and perhaps definitive history of the American superintendent of schools.

I will study the origin and development of the superintendency in American education. More specifically, I want to look at the way the job originated and developed and then the reasons why it developed as it did. Obviously, the study will have to take into account the unique American institutional structure in education and especially our patterns of local support and control. And, just as important, the story will have to be told within the context of American society, that is to say, within the context of a mass, industrial-scientific, capitalistic, democratic society. So the study will center on the historical development of the superintendent of schools but within the framework of American society and American education.

I will concentrate in the study upon the superintendents in the cities

and towns and not on the state or county superintendents. This group is now and has been for a long time (1890 at least) by far the largest, and from this standpoint alone they are the most important. I think that much of what I have to say about the city superintendents would apply to the state superintendents as well. Most of the state superintendents had been city or county superintendents before they moved into the state office. They were trained in the same way and they were influenced by the same forces that influenced the city superintendents. It is true that, especially since 1900, the state superintendent has not had the direct influence upon the schools that the city superintendent has had. Still, there is no doubt that the state superintendency is an important office and worthy of study, but I will not attempt to do that job in this study.

My hope is that this work will enable us to understand better how we got where we are in American education generally and in school administration particularly. It is already clear, and I think it will be clear in the first section of this report, that some of the vexing problems facing the contemporary superintendent of schools plagued his predecessors three quarters of a century ago. Some aspects of their comparative situations have changed, obviously, and naturally, but some other basic ones have not. If we realize this, we may be able to look beneath the surface of some of our contemporary problems in administration and strive to make whatever changes need to be made to improve American education. I think that, to the extent that we are ignorant of our past, we are less likely to be able to understand and, therefore, to deal with our contemporary problems or to plan for the future. I hope, then, that this historical analysis of school administration and especially of the key officer in

that field, the superintendent of schools, will provide data and analysis which will be useful.

2. The Early Years 1837 - 1890

The history of the superintendency parallels the development of the public school system in the United States. Free, public, "common" (elementary) schools were established in the 1830's and so were the first city superintendencies. With each year that has passed since that time, more public schools have been established, until in 1965 there are some 100,000 in existence. In 1837 the city of Buffalo, New York appointed a superintendent of schools and two years later Providence, Rhode Island did likewise. By 1870, however, there were only twenty-seven city superintendents of schools and this relatively slow growth paralleled the relatively slow growth of the public schools. For example, by 1860 only sixty-nine cities had organized a clearly defined high school course of instruction. The really rapid growth in population, in public schools both elementary and secondary, and in the number of superintendents occurs after 1870. Mowry, writing in 1895, stated that "there is today scarcely a city in the whole land which has not placed its schools in charge of a superintendent."¹ By 1915, the United States Commissioner of Education reported that there were 1,551 superintendents in cities and towns of over 4,000 persons. In 1965, there were approximately 14,000 superintendents in public schools. In

1. William A. Mowry, "Powers and Duties of School Superintendents", Educational Review, Vol. IX, (January, 1895), p. 40.

recent years, the number of superintendents has been declining in relation to the school population because of the consolidation of school districts. This trend will probably continue for some years. Still, there is a limit to consolidation, and in the present and in the foreseeable future we are talking about a very large, as well as, a very influential group of officials when we talk about the American superintendent of schools.

Why was the office of superintendent of school established in the first place and why did it flourish as it did in America? Primarily it was a combination of a sheer increase in the number of schools (and, of course, of teachers and students) and the continuously increasing complexity of the educational task. Both of these factors, of course, simply reflect the fantastic growth and development of the United States from a thinly populated, simple, agrarian society to a mass, industrial society. With each year that passed there were more students to be educated, the need to educate them was greater, and the complexity of the educational effort increased. These factors were undoubtedly the basic ones in the establishment and the numerical growth of the superintendency. They cannot, however, explain the way in which the job developed and then changed over time. This important aspect of the job can only be explained in the context of the unique features of American society and education. The most important of these was the absence of a strong active role in public education by the federal government. Education was not one of the functions given to the federal government by the framers of the Constitution. It was given by default to the states under the reserved powers clause of the Tenth Amendment. From time to time, some of the states have acted vigorously to support and control and direct education, but for the most

part it has either been delegated by them to the local districts or left to these agencies by default.

So the story of American education, administratively, (and in most other respects, but it is administration that I am concerned with) has been a story of developments in thousands of local districts all over the country. The surprising part of this development is that, despite this fact, there has been a remarkable degree of uniformity in education generally and in school administration particularly. I think this uniformity has been due to the fact that the problems in education were similar and schoolmen had a chance to read about them in the many educational journals and to discuss them in their many state and national associations which were prominent after 1865. In school administration, for example, the National Association of School Superintendents was formed in 1866. This group, which later became the Department of Superintendence of the N.E.A., met every year and discussed common problems, and these discussions were published and available to those who did not attend the meetings. On the school board side, William Bruce founded the American School Board Journal in 1891 and was instrumental in the establishment of the Department of Administration as an organization within the N.E.A. for school board members. So through the Journal and its annual meetings, school board members were fed information about common problems and their resolutions. Also, after 1900 the new graduate schools in education (and especially Teachers College, Columbia University), with their rapidly developing programs in school administration, served as a force for uniformity.

From the time of the establishment of public schools in the early seventeenth century in New England down to the present time, the power to

control and manage the schools has been in the hands of lay board or committees. When the schools were few in number and the educational task relatively simple, this system apparently worked fairly well.² Undoubtedly this was so partly because the schools were few in number and the educational task relatively simple, but also because of the calibre of men who served on school committees. According to William Mowry (1829-1917) who, in addition to his prominence as an educator and school board member, was also a student of some aspects of colonial history and as such a competent witness, stated that membership on these early committees "generally, almost invariably, included educated men--the clergymen of the town, the physician or physicians, and the member of the legal profession. The clergyman was the leading man on the committee."³

As the towns grew into cities, schools became larger and there were more of them until it seemed sensible to divide the cities into several districts, each with a separate board or committee responsible for hiring teachers, examining pupils and, in general, managing the schools within its district. Ellwood Cubberley gave this description of the pattern of development in Buffalo--a pattern which seems to have been fairly typical:

The first schoolhouse was erected in 1806. This was burned in 1813, and the first tax for an educational purpose levied by Buffalo was in 1818, for the purpose of rebuilding this schoolbuilding. By 1832 the growth of the city had been such that six small school districts, each with one small schoolhouse and one teacher, had been organized within its confines. Even in 1837, when a new law permitted the appointment of a city superintendent of schools to coordinate and oversee the schools, there were but seven districts and seven

2. IBID., p. 39.

3. IBID.

teachers, so that his duties must have been very light. On the full establishment of the free-school system, in 1839, the number of districts was increased to fifteen and a school ordered established in each, with a central school for instruction in the higher English branches.⁴

One of the events which dramatically illustrated the need for the establishment of the superintendency, and undoubtedly hastened its establishment, was the famous "Survey" of the Boston schools by some members of the school committee in 1845. The background of the "Survey" was as follows: Horace Mann had been appointed commissioner of education in Massachusetts in 1837. Deeply committed to public education as the foundation of human freedom and happiness, he worked with great energy to improve the schools of the state. Of course, every suggestion he made for improvement and certainly every criticism he made was an implicit criticism of the status quo and the educators responsible for it. In the spring of 1843, Mann visited Europe. He was greatly impressed, especially, by the Prussian schools with their warmth and their exciting intellectual qualities--a tribute to the Prussian teachers, of course, but also to the great, gentle Pestalozzi. Mann's account of his observations was published in his now famous Seventh Annual Report (1843) and the contrast between the Prussian schools and the Massachusetts schools, including the Boston schools, with their harshness and ineffectiveness was vivid indeed. The result was that "throughout 1844 he was involved in a running battle of rejoinders and rejoinders to rejoinders" with a group of Boston schoolmasters.⁵ The effect

4. Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, (Boston, 1916), p. 56.

5. Lawrence A. Cremin, Editor, Horace Mann, The Republic and the School, (New York, 1957), p. 54.

of this controversy was that the state of public education became a burning issue, especially in Boston.

So in order to get some evidence which would provide a basis for settling the question of who was right, some members of the Boston school Committee decided to devote a considerable amount of time and energy studying the actual conditions in the public schools of Boston. The studies were made at the end of the school year in 1845 and reports were issued in August. Then long extracts of the contents of the reports were published by Horace Mann (as editor) in the Common School Journal in October, November, and December. In his brief introduction to the Reports, Mann commented on their uniqueness and significance:

The Reports from which we are about to quote, relate to the Grammar and Writing Schools only. In but few instances before, has any Report of the examining committees of these schools been published. In no instance before, have these schools ever been subjected to a thorough, scrutinizing examination,--and to such an examination as would make their condition known to the public, as well as to the committee. Such an examination they have this year received; and their actual condition, as to present proficiency and ability, is now made known to the world...

Many circumstances conspire to place these Reports of the committees among the most remarkable, as well as the most instructive and admonitory of all our school documents. The high character of the committees who conducted the examination; the mode of examination, at once thorough, and perfectly fair and impartial; the labor and care expended in reducing the results of the examination to a tabular form, so that the common eye can compare them, and determine at a glance the relative standing of each school; the astounding character of the results themselves, and the consequences, in regard to a change of teachers, to which they have already conduced, together with the admirable suggestions and doctrines, laid down in their pages, on many of the most important topics that pertain to our schools;--all these, and other considerations, combine to give an extraordinary degree of importance to these Reports, and to commend them to the attentive perusal, not only of those parents immediately interested in the city schools, but of the whole people of the State.⁶

6. Common School Journal, Vol. VII, No. 19, (Boston, October 1, 1845), pp. 289-290.

The Examination Committee had the task of examining nineteen schools and more than 7,000 students, and at the outset of their Report provide evidence that the sheer numbers involved made the traditional pattern of school examination by lay committees unworkable, and this was so even though for years the committees had been ordered to limit their examinations to the first class, i.e., the most advanced class in the school. But this Committee was determined, energetic and creative. They decided to develop and submit "to the scholars a series of printed questions on all the subjects studied in the schools." It was this feature of the examination which enabled the Committee to get objective, common, comparable results from all the schools and it was this feature to which Mann referred when he described the examinations as "perfectly fair and impartial."⁷

After analyzing the tests that had been given, the Committee reported that their "first feeling" was one "of entire incredulity." The results were so bad, they reported, that "if by any accident these documents should be destroyed, we could hardly hope that your faith in our accuracy would induce you to believe the truth if we told it. But the papers are all before you, each signed by the scholar who wrote it."⁸ The Report consisted of a detailed account of the performance of the students and is, of course, much too long to be described in this document. But I think that the following short passage from the Report will be helpful in conveying the force of the message that the Report must have communicated

7. IBID., (Italics mine).

8. IBID., p. 292.

to the citizens of Boston:

There is another sad reflection suggested by these answers. They show beyond all doubt that a large proportion of the scholars of our first classes, boys and girls of fourteen or fifteen years of age, when called upon to write simple sentences, to express their thoughts on common subjects, without the aid of a dictionary or a master, cannot write, without such errors in grammar, in spelling, and in punctuation, as we should blush to see in a letter from a son or daughter of their age. And most of these children are about finishing their school career; they are going out into life; some to learn trades, some to assist their mothers in the house; the larger part never to receive any supplementary education; and how, we ask, are they, by and by, to write a letter that they would not be ashamed to exhibit?

But there is a still more melancholy consideration, which is, that, if the first class,--if the children who have, during a year, enjoyed that special care and attention which our teachers give to the upper classes,--go out imperfectly instructed, what must be the case with the hundreds and thousands of the children of our less-favored citizens, whom necessity forces to leave the schools without even reaching the first class!⁹

On the matter of the treatment of the children--a topic at the center of the controversy between Mann and the Boston schoolmasters--the Committee was "forced to believe that there has been a gross abuse of the power of corporal punishment." And the Committee ended its account of the treatment of children with this damning indictment which certainly provided vindication for Horace Mann and must have caused consternation among the schoolmasters:

It will be found upon examination that, in most of the cases where severe injury has followed corporal punishment in our schools, the offence was very trifling, and no great severity intended when the master began to strike. Moreover, it is beyond all question that in the majority of the cases of corporal punishment and other kinds of punishment in our schools, it is inflicted for violations of arbitrary rules of discipline,--for whispering, for disorderly conduct, arising perhaps from mere physical uneasiness,--and it is equally certain that the fault, in most cases, is as much that of

9. IBID., p. 299.

the school, as of the scholar. Whoever will go into our schools at any hour of the day, will find a large portion of the scholars unoccupied by any study; they may have a book before them, but as its contents are insipid, or perhaps incomprehensible, yet nevertheless to be committed to memory, and as there is no master immediately over them, they do not study. Now, to expect boys full of young life and pent-up vigor, to remain motionless, like soldiers upon duty, is to expect that which is impossible; oftentimes the best boys,--the boys who will make the ablest and best men,--will manifest their uneasiness in a way to bring down a punishment. We say that in such cases the fault is as much that of the school, as of the scholar; and, as a general rule, when children, under ordinary circumstances, are idle, or disorderly in school, we hold this fact to be prima facie evidence, either of incapacity in the master, or of faulty organization of the school;--there are too many in the class; or they are retained too long at one study; or the air of the school is vitiated; or the seats are irksome; or the mode of instruction is bad;--something is wrong.¹⁰

In commenting editorially on the Report, Horace Mann stated that it had "filled the intelligent citizen of Boston...with amazement and grief" and had "spread through the city a general and deep feeling of sorrow and mortification..." He felt that it would be "sad indeed" if these reactions "should die away without producing a reform."¹¹

Why were the schools of Boston in such a state? The Committee placed the blame directly on the administrative arrangements for the school system and recommended reforms, the most important of which was the appointment of a superintendent of schools. According to the Committee, the basic problem was that the schools were being run by the school board of twenty-four men who were not paid for their labor and who "share a responsibility, which thus broken into fragments, presses on no one."¹² Furthermore, there was

10. IBID., p. 320.

11. IBID., pp. 344-345.

12. IBID., p. 310.

the question of the school board members themselves, "who must, on the common principles of human nature, be supposed to be made willing to hold this office by every variety of motives, from the highest and purest love of usefulness, down to a mere personal purpose of coining its privileges and opportunities into dollars and cents."¹³

The Committee did not propose to eliminate the school board. On the contrary they believed that "for some purposes" it was "admirable." Its members were "fresh from the people, every year; and being chosen from all the wards, they represent all the wants and interests which should be provided for, and all the opinions and feelings which should be consulted." They would keep these "excellent elements" but add those which were "wholly wanting" and these elements were "permanence, personal responsibility, and continued and systematic labor."¹⁴ To achieve this end they would appoint a new official whose duty it would be to "watch over the schools; to know the exact condition of every one, in all particulars; to bring the lagging forward; to suffer no defects to become prescriptive, no abuses to be indurated by time; to acquire and to impart such information as shall bring all our schools to that degree of excellence which our citizens not only have a right to demand, but without which they have no right, in justice to themselves and to their children, to be satisfied. This should be his business,--his whole business; and he should be adequately paid. Although chosen annually, like our masters, his tenure of office, like theirs, would be permanent, if he discharged the duties of his office

13. IBID.

14. IBID., (Italics mine).

acceptably; and if he did not, another should be chosen in his stead. We think also that he should be chosen by the City Council, and be amenable in part to that body and in part to the School Committee, under a system of duties which can easily be arranged, when it shall be time to go into these details."¹⁵

The Committee, anticipating the objections which would be made to its recommendation to appoint a superintendent, made an effort to refute them in advance. (I include these arguments because they appear again and again in the nineteenth century in the discussions over the establishment of the superintendency.) It would be argued, they said, that the new official would be expensive. Their reply was that a full-time superintendent would actually save the city money and they illustrated their point by showing how much he would save by overseeing the purchase and care of books. Another objection would be that the superintendent having so much power would be liable to abuse it by showing favoritism, for example, in the selection of teachers and textbooks. Their reply to this point was that there was a possibility of abuse of power but they pointed out that there was favoritism and mismanagement in the existing system. There would be far less likelihood of favoritism or corruption with a single official who would be visible and who could be held accountable, something that was impossible when the schools were managed by a board of twenty-four persons. Under their proposal the schools would be under the direction of "one man, paid, under contract, before the eyes of the public, regularly reporting everything that he does under his own name,

15. IBID., p. 309.

and liable to lose his livelihood if he goes wrong."¹⁶

In retrospect, this last point is somewhat ironical. My judgment, based on all the research I have done on the superintendent, is that the weakness of his position, his lack of job security is probably the greatest single weakness in the American school system and a weakness which has been responsible for all kinds of unfortunate consequences down through the years. The irony is that the fact of his easy removability should have been one of the strongest arguments in favor of the creation of the position. The Committee, of course, wanted to make the strongest case possible and it is understandable that they would point out that the fear of losing his job would be a powerful factor operating to keep him honest. Still, the words must have been read with mixed emotions by those educators who aspired to the job. Again, in retrospect, it was unfortunate that the case was made so baldly ("liable to lose his livelihood if he goes wrong"), for it started or strengthened an idea that unfortunately has become a part of our heritage in public education. The insecurity of the job with all its far-reaching ramifications will, of course, be one of the central points of this study. As I stated earlier, the vulnerability of the superintendent of schools, and the consequences of that vulnerability, was one of the major and surprising findings in Education and the Cult of Efficiency. So I am most eager to trace the origin and development of this aspect of the job and, among other things, I want to find out when and to what extent both schoolmen and laymen became aware of the problem and what they tried to do about it.

16. IBID., p. 310, (Italics mine).

Despite the devastating character of the results of the investigation by the Committee, and despite the fact that the school board requested funds to enable them to appoint a superintendent, the Common Council of the city voted against the proposal and a superintendent was not appointed in Boston until six years later in 1851. Even then he was not given the necessary authority and apparently this was true in other cities in these early years. Cubberley, in commenting on the small number of city superintendencies established before 1870, also states that those that were established had limited authority and that the school boards had "assigned clerical rather than executive functions to the new official."¹⁷

We have excellent evidence that indicates that this unwillingness of school boards to confer authority upon their new official continued throughout the nineteenth century, and that it was characteristic of the situation not only in Boston but throughout New England. This evidence is provided by William A. Mowry who, as I pointed out earlier, was a member of the school board in Boston for many years at the end of the century. Writing in 1895 on the "Powers and Duties of School Superintendents," Mowry described the situation as follows:

This is the largest city, the metropolis, of New England. It has nearly half a million inhabitants. The people are rightfully proud of their schools. They are proud of their extensive system of supervision. They employ an able, judicious, and experienced man as superintendent. They have a corps of six supervisors, five men and one woman, all cultured, experienced, and all formerly successful teachers. But with this large and able supervisory force the committee still hold all power in their own hands, and neither the superintendent nor his six experienced supervisors make any move until they are ordered by the board. Here is the bill of particulars:

17. Op. Cit., p. 58.

The superintendent of schools in Boston is 'now and always has been an advisory officer of the school board.' According to the 'regulations' the only executive powers conferred upon him by the board are the power to strike the one session bell in stormy weather; to close schools a limited number of times in the year for teachers' meetings; and, once in two years, to assign schools and departments of school work to the several supervisors. His relation to the teachers is that of adviser merely. These school regulations say that 'The board of supervisors shall be the executive board of the school committee, and as such may be called upon to perform any of the duties of school committees under the statutes of the Commonwealth except such as are legislative in their nature.' This shows clearly the possibilities, but until the school board 'calls upon' this executive board of supervisors to perform certain defined duties they are powerless. Here is the chance to give to the supervisors authority; but has it ever been given?...

'But neither the superintendent nor the supervisors shall have any authority over or direction of the principals or other instructors except as provided by the board in the regulations or otherwise.'

Now it is clear from the above that the city of Boston might have made large and real grants of executive power to the superintendent or to the board of supervisors, or to both; but a somewhat careful search of the regulations fails to discover more than a few and quite unimportant grants of such power.

But if the so-called officers of the school board have but little executive authority, who does have it? Where is it to be found? In the management of a great system of public schools there must necessarily be large and broad executive powers, which are certainly necessary to the efficient administration of the schools. These powers are lodged in the school board itself; and they are exercised by the various standing committees of the Board. These standing committees carry their work down to the smallest particulars. Such standing committees as the committee (1) on drawing; (2) on music; (3) on manual training, (4) on sewing and cooking; (5) on physical training; (6) on kindergartens, etc., have full powers over the 'general supervision of these branches of instruction in all the schools.' Hence the 'director of physical training,' the 'director of music,' and the 'director of drawing,' etc., are responsible, not to the superintendent of the schools, as they should be, in the judgment of many, in order to get unified and consistent work, but they are directly responsible to their respective standing committees...

The conclusion cannot but be evident that the school regulations of Boston place practically the whole executive power used in carrying on the public schools of that city in the

hands of the standing committees of the school board. The superintendent and supervisors do not exercise this power, because it is not lodged in their hands. They can only invoke its exercise by these committees when the necessity comes....

I have purposely outlined the condition of affairs in Boston, because Boston is not only the metropolis of New England, but is a typical city in regard to its school management. What is true of Boston in relation to these matters is substantially true of other New England cities. While the school rules and regulations of no two cities are alike in detail, yet the same underlying principles are observable in them all.¹⁸

So despite the fact that there was widespread agreement that the superintendent of schools was a desirable and even necessary official in a school system (as evidenced by the fact that practically every city and an increasing number of smaller communities had actually appointed and were paying such a person), he had in most cases been given very little authority. Why should this have been so? I think William Mowry's answer to this question hit the nail on the head. "Everyone knows" he said, "how reluctant men are to give up authority when once they have secured it, however small or brief it may be. From the beginning, in this country, the school committees, or school boards, have had full control of the schools. When they appoint a superintendent they do not immediately and willingly transfer the authority to him and hold him responsible for results. Far from it. They have generally made him their 'agent,' to do their bidding, and have been exceedingly careful that he does not have a chance to get the reins into his own hands and drive the team himself."¹⁹

By 1895, certainly, the city superintendent of schools was an estab-

18. Op. Cit., pp. 41, 42, 44, 45.

19. IBID., p. 40.

lished part of the American public school system. In that year too, as I will show, the questions concerning the power the superintendent should have, what his role should be, and what his relationship to the school board should be were raised and discussed increasingly by both schoolmen and laymen. As I will show, these questions were temporarily resolved but not solved, and year after year down to the present time they continue to be raised and discussed.

But before plunging into the important last decade of the nineteenth century when so many of the issues surrounding the administration of the public schools were brought to the fore, I would like to add some data and analysis to my earlier presentation concerning the factors which produced the superintendent of schools.

It is clear that the rapid growth of the cities and the parallel growth of the schools was making the practice of direct school management by school boards extremely difficult and the situation in Boston was probably typical. In that city too, the publicity given to the poor quality of education the children received undoubtedly hastened the development of the office in Boston and elsewhere. The logic of the situation was clear: what the schools needed at the top, as the Boston School Committee pointed out, was "permanence, personal responsibility, and continued and systematic labor." That about summed up the case against management by committees. If they had added "expert knowledge and professional background" the case would have been almost complete.

In 1894 Burke A. Hinsdale, whom I have already introduced as a highly competent witness, made an analysis of the historical development of the American school superintendents. At this time Hinsdale was Professor of

Education at the University of Michigan and two years later he was described by the editor of the Journal of Education (Boston) as one of the leading if not the "leading educational thinker in America."²⁰ In most respects his account is similar to the one which grew out of the Boston investigation and to that presented by William Mowry. The legal power was originally vested in a school committee and they hired teachers, selected textbooks and examined pupils. On the whole, he reports this arrangement proved very "unsatisfactory."

As the schools of cities and towns increased in size and complexity, things became worse instead of better. There was no authority adequate to shape and administer the new organization. There was sad lack of unity and intelligent direction. Plainly, something must be done...Good schools were found in cities side by side with poor ones, owing to the fact that they had different principals and boards. The greatest confusion and inequality prevailed in cities where the other parts of the public service were well unified; the resulting evils became intolerable, and so school organization became absolutely necessary...And naturally--nay, inevitably--the unification or consolidation of a group of city school districts--the appearance of a school system--compelled the creation of the superintendency and the choice of a superintendent. His appearance at the educational headquarters marked the first triumph of order and organization over division and chaos. He was the pledge of unity and uniform administration in the schools, and he stands for those elements to-day.²¹

To this analysis Hinsdale adds one other factor which seems reasonable. He notes that the high school was an important factor in the creation of the superintendency. As long as a city had only elementary schools the district committee system could work, or at least it could be tolerated.

20. A. S. Winship, Editor, Journal of Education, Vol. XLIV, No. 6, p. 112.

21. Op. Cit., pp. 44, 45, 46.

But when cities began establishing high schools, these schools cut across district lines and drew students from all over the city, thus increasing the need for unified direction of the entire school system. "It cannot be doubted" says Hinsdale, "that the high school has been a unifying force of great power and usefulness." So, the logic of the case for the establishment of the superintendency.

There is one final aspect of the story of the establishment of the superintendency which is probably of more interest than of importance, and that aspect is the extent to which the origin and development of the office was influenced by European ideas and practices. Hinsdale claimed the office was peculiarly American and "native to our soil." It is a difficult question to answer. It seems clear that the European arrangements did influence the men who led in the organization and administration of education at the state level. The report of the Frenchman, Victor Cousin, to the French government on the Prussian schools included a description and a strong endorsement of the administrative and supervisory arrangements in education in that state. Cousin's report was published in the United States in 1835. Cubberley, in his history of education in the United States, with some evidence to support his case, makes the following generalization about the influence of the Cousin Report:

Its convincing description of the strong Prussian state school organization, under a state minister, and with state control over so many matters, was everywhere of value in this country. It gave support to the demands of the few leaders of the time who were struggling to reduce the rampant district system to some semblance of order, and who were trying to organize the thousands of little community school systems in each State into one state school system, under some form of centralized control. Though actually influencing legislation in but one or two of our States, the two main ideas gained from it were the importance of some form of centralized state control,

and the training of teachers in state normal schools. These influences were evident chiefly in Michigan and Massachusetts.²²

Probably the most important document in furthering the European influence upon American education generally including school administration was Horace Mann's Seventh Report. Earlier in this work I used Mann's statement on the crucial importance of the school inspectors in the improvement of the Prussian schools, and these ideas were probably more influential and certainly more widely read because of his battles with the Boston Schoolmasters. Even so, the School Committee which examined the Boston schools in making its case for a superintendent does not use the Prussian example, at least not in those parts of their Reports published in the Common School Journal. It is true, of course, that Mann was reporting on a state system, not a city system. Still, there were enough parallels with the city of Boston with its many districts so that his arguments for supervision could be applied. So the chances are very good that the Prussian example, as reported so enthusiastically by Mann, did influence many Americans and was a factor in the establishment of the city superintendency in American education. But I have no proof of influence. To settle the matter it would be necessary to examine the documents available (school board reports, journal articles, newspaper accounts, etc.) in each of the cities in which the office was established. I have neither the time nor the interest in doing this research. Perhaps a study of this nature has been done. If it has I haven't discovered it. One thing seems reasonably certain and that is that regardless of European developments and regardless of enthusiastic reports even by such influen-

22. E. P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States, (Boston, 1919), p. 273.

tial persons such as Mann, if the conditions in American education (e.g., those in Boston) had not been ripe, the office would not have been established. Americans certainly had heard about the Prussian system and they had heard about it a very enthusiastic way from a highly respected (except to the Boston Schoolmasters) source. So these ideas were certainly in their minds as they worked to solve their own problems. But the situation in education in America was different than the situation in Prussia. The Prussian schools were centralized and built from the top down. The American schools were decentralized and built from the bottom up. Even today none of our states is as centralized as Prussia was then. And witness the difficulty our superintendents had in gaining authority. In Prussia it was given by decree. In America it had to be fought for and to some extent earned. And the story of the fight constitutes an important part of this study.

3. The Crucial Decade 1890 - 1900

On the basis of what evidence I have now, it looks as though the decade 1890 to 1900 was a crucial decade in the development of the city superintendency in American education. Important battles were fought and decisions were made which shaped the public school system, making it the kind of institution it was to be for decades. I will describe the events which occurred and the decisions which were made, but in order to understand them it is necessary first to describe the conditions which existed in public education, and to some extent in American society at that time, to provide the context within which the developments in educational admin-

istration took place.

A: The Situation in the Schools

By 1900 the rapid growth of population (both native born and immigrant) coupled with the American commitment to universal, free, public education had produced a critical situation in the schools. Between 1870 and 1898 the number of children in school (and the vast majority of them were in public schools) more than doubled: from seven million in 1870 to over fifteen million in 1898.¹ This was due partly to the sheer increase in population, of course, but it was also due to the continuously increasing number of states that passed and increasingly enforced compulsory attendance laws. By 1898, twenty-seven states and territories had passed compulsory attendance laws and in the opinion of United States Commissioner Harris, these laws were being obeyed "in all but a few places."² These laws varied from state to state in terms of the compulsory age span and in terms of the length of the school year that was required. Most of the states required children to be in school between the ages of seven and fourteen, although in some states the beginning age was eight while the leaving age varied from twelve (in New Jersey) to sixteen (in Wyoming). There was even greater variation in the legal prescriptions regarding the length of the school year. This time ranged from the full time schools were in session (with certain exceptions for employed children) in Mass-

1. Nicholas Murray Butler, Editor, Monographs on Education in the United States, (Washington, D. C., 1900), Appendix III.

2. IBID., Chapter III, "Elementary Education", p. 98.

achusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Rhode Island to only eight weeks annually in Kentucky. Eleven states and the District of Columbia required only twelve weeks of attendance, five required sixteen weeks, and five others compelled twenty weeks of attendance in school annually.

Of course, the fact that the required year span and the length of the school year was considerably shorter than it is today did serve to alleviate the educational logistics problem somewhat. Still, the population growth was unprecedented and so was the legal activity requiring attendance. Furthermore, and more important to our story are several other factors which relate to cities. First the growth of population was greater in the cities than it was in the rural areas. Partly this was due to the fact that the movement from farm to city was already underway in 1890, and partly because most of the millions of immigrants (fourteen million between 1865 and 1900) settled in the cities. Second, the cities tended to have longer school years (even going beyond the state minimums) and their attendance enforcement was more effective. The result was that the larger numbers of students to be educated which the combination of a rapid population growth and compulsory attendance legislation produced, bore most heavily on the cities. And it was in the cities that the office of superintendent of schools developed and flourished in the United States.

So a basic point of the educational background of the decade of the nineties was one that was to become a continuing problem in American education--that of a rapid growth in school population. This fact--the sheer number of students to be educated, (a number always increasing except perhaps during the thirties), plus the always increasing effort to provide a better quality of education, plus the inadequate financial arrange-

ment we have had for supporting our schools have produced the unfortunate context in which the office of the city superintendent of schools has developed. The problem started to become acute in the 1890's; it has been acute ever since. City superintendents always had too many students to educate, they were always under pressure to educate them better and they were seldom given the resources to enable them to do the job.

Given the situation described above, certain other developments could be predicted. The first is that the physical facilities necessary to educate so many children probably would not have been provided. And this was exactly what happened. The evidence is overwhelming that in the 1890's the city superintendents of schools were faced with a formidable problem in attempting to provide even minimal educational facilities for the students. The journals, both professional and popular, reported continuously on the inadequacy of school buildings and equipment. In February of 1895, the editor of the American School Board Journal, William George Bruce, reported that 130,000 children had been excluded from the public schools of New York City and Brooklyn because of lack of proper facilities. He estimated that there were more than 300,000 children in the United States who were being denied an education because of lack of facilities and yet he said "legislatures continue to enact compulsory laws and kill off appropriations for school buildings."³ All through the decade the pages of the Journal continuously report the story: not enough schools--and a matter which will be dealt with shortly--not enough qualified teachers.

3. American School Board Journal, Vol. X, No. 2, February 1895, p. 9.

The physical problems of the schools, namely the lack of classrooms, and overcrowded or unhygienic classrooms were brought before the profession and the public forcibly in two articles published in the Forum in May of 1895. One entitled "The Criminal Crowding of Public Schools", was written by James H. Penniman, a Yale graduate and for many years a master in the De Lancy School in Philadelphia. The second article was written by Henry Dwight Chapin, a Princeton graduate and pediatrician, and entitled "Crowded Schools as Promoters of Disease." Penniman had gathered his data from the annual reports of school boards of several large cities including Brooklyn, Boston, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Detroit, Richmond, and Buffalo. Some cities were in worse shape than others, but the essential message was the same--too many children, not enough classrooms. The situation in Brooklyn, he said, was "deplorable." It was generally conceded, he said, that one teacher could not teach more than thirty-five or forty pupils, especially in the primary grades, and do a good job. Then he used the following statement from the Brooklyn Report which described the situation in the primary grades.

If we may take 60 as the largest number of pupils that one teacher can instruct with any degree of effectiveness and the largest number that may occupy an ordinary class-room without danger to health, it appears that in October last there were 377 classes in which the conditions of effective teaching and hygienic precaution did not exist. . . . Of these classes, 231 had registers between 60 and 70; 65 classes had registers between 70 and 80; 22 classes had registers between 80 and 90; 18 classes had registers between 90 and 100; 2 classes had registers between 100 and 110; 16 classes had registers between 120 and 130; 4 classes had registers between 130 and 140; 2 classes had registers between 140 and 150; while one class reached the enormous total of 158.⁴

4. The Forum, Vol. XIX, March-August, 1895, p. 289.

Penniman pointed out that the result of this overcrowding was that many students were receiving a very poor quality of education and were being sent out of school unprepared to cope with the world in which they would have to live.

Chapin, in his article, concentrated on the health problems that existed in New York City as a result of the inadequate facilities. He reported that the schools were overcrowded and poorly ventilated and poorly lighted. Children were crammed together and forced to sit in "constricted, uncomfortable positions" because of the lack of proper furniture. In addition, he said, there was in many schools no proper place to hang wraps and cloaks, and he added:

. . . Damp and dirty outer clothing should never be kept in a school-room crowded with little children, for in case any of these articles are infected by germs of disease especially of scarlet-fever and diphtheria, many of the adjacent garments are liable to be infected. . . . No better rough incubator of disease germs could be devised than a small, closed, unventilated wardrobe on a stormy day, packed with the wet and soiled outer clothing of children coming from all sorts and kinds of homes.⁵

The other major development which was predictable under the circumstances was the poor quality of the teachers in the American schools. When the free, public, common schools were established in the 1830's, it was realized, at least by men such as James Carter and Horace Mann, that a special effort would have to be made to provide teachers. Partly as a result of the efforts of these two men, a new institution was established for the training of teachers--the normal school. United States Commissioner of Education Harris reported that by 1898 there were 167 public normal

5. IBID., Henry D. Chapin, "Crowded Schools as Promoters of Disease," p. 299.

schools enrolling 46,245 but graduating only 8,000 each year. In addition, there were 178 private normal schools with 21,293 students but graduating only 2,000.⁶ As to the location of these schools, Burke Hinsdale described the situation as follows:

The northern and western states have generally adopted the normal school idea. In the west they spring out of the soil and grow up side by side with the other institutions of civil society. Nor is this all. At the close of the civil war there was not a single normal school in the southern states; since that time, however, they have been generally introduced as an indispensable feature of the common school system. . . . New York now has twelve public normal schools, Pennsylvania thirteen, Massachusetts nine, West Virginia, North Carolina, Missouri, and Wisconsin seven each. No other state has more than six, and a few have none. Ohio, however, is the only great state that has no state normal school.⁷

This was certainly an impressive record of growth, but it did not nearly match the growth in school population. As would be expected, the cities were better off than the rural areas, especially if a city had a municipal normal school, as many of them including St. Louis and Cleveland did. Even so, Commissioner Harris reported that even in these "highly favored" cities only 50 to 60% of the teachers were normal school graduates, while in the countryside only one teacher in four had a normal school diploma.⁸ The fact was that by the turn of the century the majority of teachers in the elementary schools were young women who were not even graduates of a normal school. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the normal schools in those years were not even the equivalent of good

6. Op. Cit., p. 82.

7. IBID., p. 370.

8. IBID., p. 83.

secondary schools. Requirements for admission were minimal (usually 16 yrs. of age and the ability to read and write), the course of study consisted of a study of the material the children were to learn, plus some attention to techniques of teaching and classroom management, and if the student completed the full three year course, some practice teaching. It could hardly be said that the normal school graduates were educated persons--they received only the minimum essentials. And as has been shown, most teachers did not complete the course.

Burke Hinsdale, in his monograph on the training of teachers prepared for the Paris Exposition of 1900 in which he describes at length the situation I have presented briefly above, quotes a visiting German educator to the effect that the poor preparation of teachers was the weakest point in the American school system. Professor Hinsdale goes on to say,

But it must be remembered that this great system is the work of but sixty years. It has been impossible to train teachers as fast as the schools required them; the need has constantly outrun the public ability, and still more, perhaps, the public ideals. Under the circumstances, no people could have made the supply equal the demand.⁹

Hinsdale's explanation for this unfortunate situation was correct, but it was only part of the story as he himself admitted. The other part of the problem was that there was no effective agency or agencies to control the licensing and therefore the quality of teachers. Hinsdale provides evidence on the nature and extent of the problem in the following passage:

. . .To protect the schools or the public against unworthy persons without burdening deserving teachers, is the problem to be solved. Much of the difficulty attending the solution

9. IBID., pp. 404 - 405.

of the problem arises from the highly complex form of the American government, and the emphasis that is everywhere placed upon local as opposed to central authority. Education is a state, not a national function; moreover, the states, in accordance with the popular genius, vest this power primarily in local authorities, sometimes town or city boards, but more frequently county boards of examiners. In recent years many of the states have set up state examining boards, empowered to issue state certificates valid either for life or for a term of years. None of the states, however, have abandoned the earlier local boards, which still examine the great majority of school teachers. In Massachusetts, which is one of the states that have never adopted the new plan, there are three hundred and thirty-three boards authorized to grant certificates, not one of which, however, is legally valid beyond the town or city in which it is issued. Many teachers, and these generally the best teachers, naturally look upon the existing system as being unreasonable and burdensome, and insist that a wider validity shall be given to their certificates when they have once proved their ability to teach. Sometimes the evils of the system are mitigated and the system so rendered less intolerable through the legal or practical recognition of the principle of comity, whereby the attestation of one examining authority is accepted by other such authorities. Still no satisfactory solution has yet been reached.¹⁰

On the basis of the evidence presented already, it could be inferred that the quality of teaching in the public schools was poor. But we have better evidence--the first hand observation of an intelligent, reasonably objective writer. I refer of course to Joseph Mayer Rice who has already been introduced in connection with his judgments concerning the crucial importance of the superintendency. It will be remembered that Rice visited several hundred classrooms in several large cities in the eastern half of the United States. He found some teaching that he regarded as very good--and this was the case in Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and St. Paul--but most of it he regarded as pretty bad. In his articles which were published in the Forum in the winter of 1892-93, Rice described at length

10. IBID., pp. 401 - 402.

conditions as he found them, and they were especially bad in his judgment in New York, Boston, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Buffalo, and Philadelphia. His concept of poor teaching was teaching in which rote memorization and drill was stressed and in which the interest or aptitude of the child was neglected. In his introduction to his book he wrote about his concept of good and bad teaching as follows:

By an unscientific or mechanical school is meant one that is still conducted on the antiquated notion that the function of the school consists primarily, if not entirely, in crowding into the memory of the child a certain number of cut-and-dried facts--that is, that the school exists simply for the purpose of giving the child a certain amount of information. As, in such schools, the manner in which the mind acquires ideas is naturally disregarded, it follows that the teachers are held responsible for nothing beyond securing certain memoriter results. Consequently, the aim of the instruction is limited mainly to drilling facts into the minds of the children, and to hearing them recite lessons that they have learned by heart from text-books. Such methods are termed antiquated, because they represent instruction as it was before the time of the great educators, when a science of education was unknown. Further, as the manner in which the mind acquires ideas is not taken into account, the teacher makes no attempt to study the needs of the child, and consequently no bond of sympathy forms between the pupil and the teacher. In these schools the attitude of the teacher toward the child is as a rule cold and unsympathetic, and at times actually cruel and barbarous.

The schools conducted on scientific principles differ widely from the mechanical schools. While the aim of the old education is mainly to give the child a certain amount of information, the aim of the new education is to lead the child to observe, to reason, and to acquire manual dexterity as well as to memorize facts--in a word, to develop the child naturally in all his faculties, intellectual, moral, and physical. As in these schools the teacher is guided in her work by the nature of the child mind--that is, by the laws of mental development--she is constantly in search of such light as will guide her in giving the child the benefit of what is known of the nature of the mind and its mode of development. We find, therefore, widely distributed among the teachers a truly progressive spirit, much enthusiasm, and a desire to become conversant with the laws of psychology and the principles of education. It is almost exclusively in the cities where the teachers constantly pursue professional studies under the guidance of their superintendents that schools of this order are found.

As it is no longer the text-book or the arbitrary will of the superintendent, but the laws of psychology, that now become the ruling spirit of the school, the order of things becomes reversed and, in consequence, the atmosphere of the school-room entirely changed. The teacher who endeavors to instruct in accordance with the nature of the mind is of necessity obliged to study the child, so that she may understand him and know how to minister to his needs. In this manner a true bond of sympathy forms between the teacher and the child. The attitude of the teacher now changes from that of lord and master to that of friend and guide. She thus ceases to be cold and harsh, and becomes loving and sympathetic. The school-room loses its prison aspect and becomes characteristic of a refined and refining home. Further, when the teacher is guided in her work by the laws of psychology, there is a change in the methods of instruction as well as in the spirit of the class-room. While in the mechanical schools the recitation periods are devoted either to hearing children recite lessons that they have studied by heart, or to drilling the pupils in facts, in the schools conducted on scientific principles such procedures are not tolerated, the teachers being obliged to devote these periods to actual teaching, and--to the best of their ability--in accordance with methods approved by the educational scientists. . . . The old system of education thinks only of the results, and with its eye upon the results, forgets the child; while the new system is in large part guided by the fact that the child is a frail and tender, loving and lovable human being. . . . When natural methods are philosophically applied by the teacher, the child becomes interested in his work, and the school is converted into a house of pleasure. When, on the other hand, the child is taught by mechanical methods, palatable form, in consequence of which he takes no interest in his work, learning becomes a source of drudgery, and the school a house of bondage.¹¹

With these conceptions in mind, Rice's comments about the various schools he visited become more meaningful. Here, first, is his summary of the New York City schools:

The typical New York City primary school, although less barbarous and absurd than the one just described, is nevertheless a hard, unsympathetic, mechanical-drudgery school, a school

11. Joseph M. Rice, The Public School System of the United States, (New York, 1893), pp. 20 - 23.

into which the light of science has not yet entered. Its characteristic feature lies in the severity of its discipline, a discipline of enforced silence, immobility, and mental passivity. . . I beg to repeat that the work described as typical may be found in all but very exceptional schools, the differences, not only in the discipline, but also in the methods, being differences in degree, and not in kind. I have visited many of the New York primary schools, but have not yet found any exceptional ones.¹²

From New York, Rice turned to Baltimore. The public school system of Baltimore, he said:

. . . represents mechanical education almost in its purity. Indeed, all things considered, the schools of Baltimore compare unfavorably even with those of New York. While the schools of New York are in the main mechanical, at least this much can be said in their favor,--namely, that none but trained teachers are now appointed. In Baltimore, on the other hand, it is only in exceptional instances that trained teachers are added to the corps.¹³

His judgment about the schools of Buffalo was that they were in "deplorable condition" and he said that he had found only a few places where the burdens were as heavy, especially on the younger children, as they were in this city.¹⁴ The Cincinnati schools were "upon much the same level as those of Baltimore and Buffalo."¹⁵ But there were other aspects of the Cincinnati schools which he reported upon which add to the evidence presented by James H. Penniman and Henry Dwight Chapin.

There are a number of things besides mechanical methods that serve to render miserable the lives of the children attending the public schools of Cincinnati. The child requires air and sunshine, but a large number of the buildings are dark and

12. IBID., pp. 39 & 43.

13. IBID., p. 55.

14. IBID., p. 75.

15. IBID., p. 80.

gloomy, and in many of them the laws of health are otherwise ignored, the class-rooms being overcrowded and poorly ventilated. I found one room where the furniture was so closely packed that the children were literally obliged to squeeze their little bodies in between the desks and the backs of their benches, there being scarcely room enough for them to expand their lungs, much less to move their limbs about freely. In another room the seats were so arranged that a few of the children were obliged to sit very near a large stove.¹⁶

All this was bad enough, but even worse was the extreme use of corporal punishment which he found in the Cincinnati schools. This was used, he said, to a "disgraceful extent" with "hundreds of regular cases a month" in some schools.¹⁷

I should pause at this point to comment on the problem of corporal punishment. It had been used, undoubtedly, since the beginning of time by parents and teachers to discipline children. We have evidence that it was widely used in the schools of Boston in the 1840's, and, doubtless, it continued to be used all over the country. There were always those, including Horace Mann, who deplored the brutal punishment of children, and most states and many cities made some effort to control it through law. United States Commissioner Harris reported on this aspect of the situation in 1900 as follows:

In one state, New Jersey, the teacher is forbidden by law to inflict corporal punishment. No other state goes to this length, but Illinois, Kansas, Mississippi, Montana, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia specifically prescribe a penalty for excess amounting to cruelty. Legal punishment would be meted out to a brutal teacher in the other states just as surely as in these, but resort would be had to the common law and not to a statute. Only in Arizona is there formal statutory authority for corporal punishment, but whipping

16. IBID., pp. 80 - 81.

17. IBID., p. 81.

has been the common mode of discipline in school from time immemorial; custom legalizes it, and unless forbidden in express terms the teacher does not need the authority of a special permissive law. Judicial decisions to this effect have been made in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and probably in other states.

Local school boards have always the implied power to make regulations for the order and discipline of their respective schools, and three states, viz., Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania, expressly grant them this power. Acting under this power, expressed or implied, several cities, notably New York City, Chicago, and Albany, have prohibited absolutely the use of the rod. The same is true of Providence, Rhode Island, except in the primary grades, and in them whipping must not be inflicted unless the written consent of the parent or guardian has been previously filed with the city superintendent.

Corporal punishment may be used as a last resort and under rigid regulations as to reports, etc., in a great many cities, among them being Baltimore, Detroit, Indianapolis, Louisville, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Pittsburg, Rochester, St. Louis, San Francisco, Worcester, and Philadelphia.¹⁸

There is plenty of evidence contained in the educational literature as well as in the writings of reformers, such as Rice, to show that corporal punishment was common in the public schools in the 1890's. The following news items taken from the May 1895 issue of the American School Board Journal, provide a sample of that evidence and also show that legal action was often taken:

Cincinnati. Principal Scheidemantle is to be investigated for brutality. He was excoriated. . .

Cripple Creek, Col. Miss Lena Boss, teacher, was fined for inflicting excessive punishment. . .

Rome, N.Y. Wm. Blake has been sued for inflicting injury upon a pupil. . .

Springfield, Mo. Principal Hollister was arrested for assaulting a student.

Tyty, Ga. McAndrew Tison, a teacher, was sentenced to the chain gang for twelve months for breaking a pupil's jaw.

Madison, Wis. Jas. M. Allen, a teacher who killed a pupil several years ago, has been pardoned. . .

18. Op. Cit., p. 133.

Quincy, Ill. Gertrude Dewaree, a teacher, was fined \$3 for whipping a pupil.

Newark, N.J., Supt. Barringer reported to the board in favor of corporal punishment.¹⁹

So the "spare the rod, spoil the child" concept was very much a part of the educational picture in the 1890's. From a strictly educational standpoint in terms of its physical and psychological implications for both children and teachers it was a tremendously important situation. But it is hard to connect it directly to the main theme of our story. Administration did discuss the problem occasionally, but it was not one of their major concerns, probably because, like the very large classes, they were used to it. The harsh treatment of children was attacked primarily by the reformers, and it seems especially those who had seen the gentle Pestalozzian doctrines as they were applied in the German schools. I refer, of course, especially to Horace Mann and Joseph Rice. The gentle treatment of children became one of the basic elements of the progressive education platform. Lawrence Cremin contends that Joseph Rice was a prime mover in getting progressive education started, and my evidence supports Cremin.²⁰ Rice was a potent, influential person and he pushed American education toward reform in many directions. In this particular instance, millions of children can be thankful that he did. Consider this passage, for example, in which he is comparing the schools of Indianapolis with those in St. Louis:

. . . This striking contrast is due to the fact that the Indianapolis schools abound in the element which in St. Louis is so ob-

19. Op. Cit., Vol. X., No. 5, p. 11.

20. Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School, (New York, 1961), p. 22.

viously lacking--consideration for the child, sympathy. The cold, hard, and cruel struggle for results is here unknown. The teacher uses every means at her command to render the life of the child happy and beautiful, without endangering its usefulness.

I entered one of the rooms containing the youngest children at the time of the opening exercises. The scene I encountered was a glimpse of fairyland. I was in a room full of bright and happy children, whose eyes were directed toward the teacher, not because they were forbidden to look in any other direction, but because to them the most attractive object in the room was their teacher.²¹

So far as I know, Rice did not make an explicit connection between the harsh treatment of children and the need for power in the superintendents office. But it is certainly implied when he argues for the need for more supervision for teachers. And that supervision in his plan would move teachers away from corporal punishment on the negative side and indeed move them radically toward just the opposite. To the extent then, that Rice was influential in helping superintendents gain power, the fact of the harsh treatment of children and his deep concern about it (which comes out forcibly in his articles) was a factor in helping to change the administrative arrangements in American public schools in the 1890's.

Before my brief digression into the question of corporal punishment, I was presenting evidence to show the quality of teachers in the American public schools. The testimony of qualified witnesses including William T. Harris, Burke Hinsdale, and Joseph Rice indicates that it was pretty bad. Rice provides us with an excellent summary as follows:

. . . Indeed the professional weakness of the American teacher is the greatest sore spot of the American schools. In some localities we find earnestness, conscientiousness, and enthusiasm in abundance, but these characteristics, favorable as they are, no

21. Op. Cit., pp. 101 - 102.

more constitute expert pedagogical qualifications than they do expert medical or legal qualifications. The truth is that as a rule our teachers are too weak to stand alone, and therefore need constantly to be propped up by the supervisory staff. It is for this reason that the character of the schools of any given locality depends so largely on the ability of a single or at most a few individuals. The weakness of the American teachers can be well observed even in those cities where only the best obtainable are employed.

The graduate of a good city training-school represents, generally speaking, the best this country produces in the way of teachers. When the training received at one of these institutions is compared with that received at a normal school in Germany, the limited extent of the former becomes apparent. The State normal schools are conducted upon a broader basis, it is true, but their requirements for admission are in most instances much lower. But the true professional incompetency of our teachers, taken all in all, does not become fully apparent until we consider that not more than a small percentage of persons engaged in teaching in the public schools of this country are normal-school graduates. Of those teaching (besides the normal-school graduates), some are high-school graduates, others have simply attended a normal school, high school, or academy for one or more terms, while a very large number of licenses to teach are granted to those whose education does not extend beyond that received at a grammar-school, with or without a little extra coaching.²²

At the very end of his book, Rice makes a statement which helps his credibility as an historical witness and which indicates, too, that he believed there was hope for the future:

That I may have conveyed a more pessimistic view of the situation than I actually possess is owing entirely to force of circumstances, and not to any desire on my part to do so. It was because I deemed it my duty to direct the attention of the public primarily to those children who are most grievously wronged, and consequently to the schools most urgently in need of reform, that I was led to devote so much space to the discussion of such schools as are a disgrace to an enlightened nation.

As I have pointed out in this chapter, the general educational spirit of the country is progressive, the schools of a large number of our cities now laboring in the right direction. But we must never forget that in the United States each community

22. IBID., p. 119.

conducts its schools independently, so that the favorable condition of the schools of one locality reflects absolutely no credit on those who manage the schools of another locality.²³

So the situation in the American public schools by the turn of the century was not generally a rosy one. In the rural areas we find inadequate facilities and poorly qualified teachers. In the cities the teachers were better but they were engulfed by the sheer numbers of students to be educated--especially in the east. Why should this have been so in wealthy America? The two direct causes were lack of adequate resources and incompetent or corrupt school boards.

The evidence of inadequate financial support is overwhelming. It is manifest in the evidence on inadequate physical facilities already presented. It is manifest, too, month after month in the pages of the professional journals. Items such as the following appeared in the American School Board Journal continuously:

Kansas City, Kas. Board has decided that its teachers must work one month for nothing owing to a shortage in funds.

Monterey, Cal. On account of lack of funds the board is obliged to close the schools for the winter. . . .²⁴

Vicksburg, Tenn. Board has decided to reduce the salaries of white teachers for the ensuing term to \$40 per month, and those of colored teachers to \$25, the reduction in each case being about twenty per cent. This is necessitated it is claimed by the fact that a considerable portion of the income of the schools will be required for a new high school building.²⁵

And the following statement made in an Address before the 1896 meeting of the Iowa School Board Convention by the Honorable F. D. Pierce of Cedar

23. IBID., p. 230.

24. Op. Cit., Vol. X, No. 5, May 1895, p. 3.

25. IBID., Vol. XI, November 1895, p. 3.

Falls, could have been made in any state in the Union in that year.

. . .I do not want to be a croaker, a fault finder, with those who are in authority in these matters, but with all our exalted claims for an educational system, I believe it falls far short, not only of what it ought to be, but of what we are capable of making it. I know the cry is often heard that the burden of taxation for school purposes, is already heavy and hard to bear, but were this burden doubled and the funds wisely employed, no better investment could possibly be found for our money. With the amount now appropriated for school purposes, it is possible to do about half what ought to be done for every young person who grows up among us. . .

Few things are more discouraging than to see how sparingly our legislators in this state provide for our educational institutions, as they are now constituted. This great state of Iowa, one of the wealthiest in the Union, and containing a population of over two million souls, has one Normal school. One institution whose business it is to furnish those who are to engage in teaching with the necessary training for that calling; and even this is cramped and stunted because of the parsimonious treatment it receives at the hands of our legislature.²⁶

The details of Pierce's statement would have to be changed but the parsimonious level of support for education he spoke about would be true in many states in 1966. In the 1890's the lack of support was more understandable. While the great economic revolution that had occurred had created great wealth, that wealth was very unevenly distributed. In the rural areas money was scarce and hard to come by. It was bad enough (the economic situation) to generate the tremendous struggle that farmers waged against big business, and especially the railroads, in the 1880's and 90's, and in the great cities the social and economic situation was often dreadful. This is the way Princeton historian Arthur Link describes the economic situation at the end of the century.

The most significant consequence of the economic revolution was the creation of a powerful productive economy that

26. IBID., Vol. XIII, December 1896, pp. 9 & 18.

provided in spite of its limitations an increasingly rich material life for a majority of people. Yet industrialization took place in such a way as to create extraordinary economic and social problems for twentieth-century Americans.

For one thing, freedom from public control allowed businessmen to engage in ruthless economic warfare, the end result of which was often destruction of competition and establishment of monopoly. Big business by 1901 was either monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic in many basic industries, while new enterprises were encountering grave difficulty in entering the field. Moreover, even before the turn of the century investment bankers had begun to extend their control over railroads and industries and to build interlocking financial empires. In other words, an economic oligarchy dominated the American economy by 1900.

In the second place, the economic revolution had created social problems of enormous magnitude--cities that grew too fast, where millions of people lived amid squalor and misery; the exploitation of women and children; and a whole complex of problems caused by unemployment, illness, and perilous old age. These were the human costs of rapid and uncontrolled industrialization. A growing body of thoughtful Americans realized that continuation of such unrestrained exploitation could only result in the degradation of the masses.

Finally, the manner in which the economic revolution took place meant that the American people by the turn of the century had been deprived of a large part of their great heritage of land, timber, and mineral resources by railroads and the captains of industry. Wealthy men had entered politics and dominated city, state, and federal governments to bring this about. How to recover that lost heritage, restore representative government, and subject great wealth to a measure of public control would constitute the paramount domestic challenge of the twentieth century.²⁷

Clearly, then as now, the wealthiest men sent their children to private schools and the public schools did not get the financial support they needed. There were some outstanding exceptions to this situation and the schools of Brookline, Massachusetts under the very able leadership of Yale graduate Samuel T. Dutton are an example. Under Dutton the Brookline schools became a showcase in the mid-nineties and Dutton himself was invited to lecture at Harvard in 1895, and 1897, and at the University

27. A. S. Link & William B. Catton, American Epoch: A History of the United States Since the 1890's, (New York, 1965), pp. 6 & 7.

of Chicago in 1897-98. In 1900, he was appointed Director of the Horace Mann School and Professor of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University. This is the way A. E. Winship, editor of the Journal of Education (Boston), described the Brookline High School in January of 1896, five years after Dutton had been appointed superintendent.

Until five years ago, the Brookline high school was practically boycotted by the rich people, of whom there are many in town. Members of the school board sent their children out of town for their preparatory school education, and this was not because of any dissatisfaction with the teachers or with the quality of work. In five years the population has not materially changed, but the high school attendance has tripled, and students come from Boston and other towns and pay tuition, not because the pupils get more or less of Greek or Latin, the sciences or literature, but because they get the Brookline high school. What is this school? Much of it is indescribable, but it is in a new and, interiorly, beautiful building. It has not cost so much as many another schoolhouse in the state, but it is a gem in its appointments. It is, first of all, well adapted to every educational need. It has as fine an audience room as there is in New England. It has an ideal gymnasium for the girls and another for the boys. The reception rooms, three in number, are furnished for royalty, the Axminster carpets being made especially for the various rooms, as was the furniture. The whole building is an art museum. Several hundred beautiful pictures, the gifts of private individuals, adorn the walls of all the halls, reception rooms, and every classroom, while elegant classic statuary - all private gifts - adorns some of the rooms, one piece having cost, it is said, \$1,000. The building, centrally situated, faces the playground of the town, with several acres that will be ever open to the pupils' sports. On a lot adjoining the school grounds there is to be erected at once a bath and swimming house, costing \$15,000, for the citizens. Public spirit and private benevolence has made of the Brookline high school an institution of which the rich and the poor alike are proud, in which music and art are enjoyed at their full, while Greek, Latin, sciences, mathematics, literature, and history are as well taught as anywhere in the country.

What does all this signify? This is, at least, a new and grand uplift in the ideal of high school education. It is not many years since the high school was a luxury of the cities and wealthy towns. Now, practically, every child in Massachusetts has the advantages of a high school, and the difference between the high schools of town and city has been disappearing until there are scores and scores of high schools all over the

state that give almost as good education as Boston. This simply means that the poorer communities fare as well as the richer. It is not in human nature to permit this to remain thus. All progress comes from the advance of the more favored, who soon settle down, content with the new order of things, until the advantage disappears by the coming up of the less favored, when they are spurred to advance a second time. If Wilkesbarre and Fitchburg mean anything, it is that the multitude will hereafter remain through the high school course. If Brookline means anything, it is that private benevolence and a greater devotion of better brains in centers of wealth are to have high schools on a broader basis, with nobler ideals, schools in which art, music, social grace, and culture are to find a place with pure scholarship. This means, in the end, a recasting of all high schools, an advance all along the line, until the Brookline ideals reign everywhere.²⁸

So there were at least some bright spots on the educational horizon but they were few and far between.

The other major factor (besides lack of money) responsible for the sad plight of the public schools was the administration of the schools by local school boards. I will deal with this problem in the next section of this report in connection with the struggle for power between school boards and superintendents, but it is necessary and desirable to present some of the evidence concerning this situation here in order to round out my picture of the public schools.

First we have the evidence provided by Joseph Rice on the basis of his extensive observation of the public schools in 1892. Rice believed there were four basic factors that influenced the quality of the schools in every city: the public, the board of education, the superintendent and his staff, and the teachers. His opinion was that most lay citizens took no intelligent interest in their schools whatever. A local pride, based on complete lack of knowledge and indifference to the actual administra-

28. Op. Cit., Vol. XLIII, No. 3, pp. 44 - 45.

tion of the schools, was about all that he found in the general citizenry. This left a clear field of operations to the politicians, in whose hands usually rested the power to constitute school boards, in one way or another. Rice says:

These boards are selected according to whims. Some are elected by the people, others are appointed, the appointing power lying in the hands of mayors, judges, or councilman; or a board of education (as at Buffalo) may consist simply of a committee of the common council. In some cities the board of education is formed by two or three distinct bodies, each of which is so constituted that while it has enough independent power to create a considerable amount of mischief on its own account, it is nevertheless sufficiently dependent on the others to be able to prove that the latter are at fault when anything goes amiss. The manner in which the boards conduct their affairs varies markedly. In some cities their actions are governed to a considerable extent by selfish motives, whether political or other, while in other cities the members of the board are entirely unselfish in their official acts.²⁹

In New York City, for example, the schools were administered in the following manner. There was a board of education consisting of twenty-one members appointed by the mayor. For each of the twenty-four wards of the city there was a board of trustees of five members: finally there were eight boards of inspectors of three members each with each board exercising supervision over three wards. These three separate groups were more or less independent bodies, and together made up one hundred and sixty-five persons "directly connected with the management of the schools."

The result was, said Rice:

. . .When anything goes amiss, it is impossible to discover which one of these one hundred and sixty-five persons is responsible. 'No one is responsible for anything,' has become a byword among those who in any way seek to fix responsibility. In many of the schools a most horribly unsanitary condition of

29. Op. Cit., p. 11.

affairs prevails, for which, however, no one appears to be responsible. The course of studies is highly unscientific, but no one has constructed it, and no one is responsible for it. When appointments are to be made, every one is on the alert; when responsibility is to be fixed, no one is in readiness to step forward.³⁰

There was also a superintendent of schools, who was "simply an executive officer" who kept books and attended some meetings, and eight assistant superintendents, who were supposed to do the actual supervising of four thousand teachers.

Some of the results of having such a system of administration were about what one would expect. No principal could be discharged without sixteen adverse votes of the board of education out of twenty-one, and Rice says that it was practically impossible to ever secure that number. Before a teacher could be removed, three trustees out of five in the ward had to recommend it, and two out of three of the ward's board of inspectors. In addition the teacher could appeal to the board of education and that body could, if it wished, reverse the decision and reinstate her. The result was that New York City teachers were seldom discharged, even for the grossest negligence and incompetency.³¹

The system of administration of the schools in Philadelphia was equally cumbersome. There was a central board, with one member for each ward, appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas, and a local board for each ward, with thirteen members, twelve elected and the thirteenth a delegate from the central board. The local board appointed principals and teachers. Before 1883, there was no superintendent so each

30. IBID., p. 48.

31. IBID., p. 44.

school was run "according to the whims of its principal." When a superintendent was appointed an unfortunate situation developed of the kind for which there was so much opportunity under such administrative systems. The local boards, controlling teachers and principals and fearing the central board would gain power through the superintendent, encouraged teachers and principals to defy him. In this power struggle, the central board always supported the superintendent but, in wards where he could not win over the local boards, he was greatly handicapped in making any progress toward improvement of the schools. The assistant superintendents, were also handicapped in their work so that, in 1892, Rice felt that "the public schools of Philadelphia, after being supervised for ten years by a corps of earnest workers, are still but little beyond the beginning of a progressive movement."³²

In Baltimore, board members were elected by the Common Council, one for each ward, and as each ward councilman was accorded the courtesy of appointing his own candidate by his fellow members, who then voted for the nominee, it was entirely a school board of the ward politicians. Members of the school board, in turn, nominated teachers, each for his own ward, who were then confirmed by the board as a whole. Prospective teachers could secure an appointment through the patronage of their ward board member or through his patron, the ward councilman. Therefore, in 1892, Rice says, "The schools of Baltimore are almost entirely in the hands of untrained teachers." He discovered one teacher there who stayed home every time it rained, without being discharged.³³

32. IBID., p. 151.

33. IBID., pp. 63 - 64.

There were cities in 1892 in which the school boards were honest and competent and the schools were free of political patronage or control. One such city was St. Paul, Minnesota and Rice described the development as follows:

Owing to the fact that politics had played such havoc with the schools of that city, an attempt was made to improve the conditions by a reorganization of the school system. This reorganization consisted in placing the power to appoint the members of the school board in the hands of the mayor, and in reducing their number from fifteen to seven. A reorganization of this nature did not necessarily mean that the schools would become separate from politics; but it so happened that the mayor appointed as members of the school board seven men of unquestioned character, not one of whom was a politician. Thus the schools of St. Paul were at a single sweep completely severed from politics. The effect is excellent. My visits to the St. Paul schools were made in June, 1892, just fifteen months after the inauguration of the new board, and already at that time there was unmistakable evidence that the schools were rapidly improving.³⁴

The evidence indicates St. Paul was the exception to the rule as the continuing complaints about politics and political influence harmful to the education of children shows. In January of 1895, for example, William George Bruce, editor of the influential American School Board Journal and a school board member himself, wrote an editorial entitled "The Politician in Schools." Bruce is an excellent witness here because he was in communication with and received reports from school boards and superintendents all over the country, and because he was a champion of school boards (as will be seen in the next section of this report) who could be assumed to present them in their most favorable light whenever possible. Here is part of Bruces opinion:

One of the interesting phases of the American public school system is presented in the operations of the politician.

34. IBID., pp. 183 - 184.

He is an ever energetic, ever busy factor. He dips his hands into school treasuries; he decides who shall teach the youth of the land and who shall not; he has made proper school facilities impossible whenever they are impossible; in fact, his influence is wielded ingeniously and effectively.

Weed out your politician. He infests the boards. Shirk no duty in carrying out the best interests of your school system. Meet the demands of your community fearlessly and honestly. Rebuke the politician.³⁵

The complaints continued. In the winter of 1896 the Atlantic Monthly circulated questionnaires to teachers and superintendents all over the country asking about (1) class size, (2) teacher turnover, (3) teacher age, (4) political influence, (5) salaries, (6) requirements or qualifications for teachers, and (7) chances for promotion in teaching. More than 1,500 replies were received and eminent psychologist G. Stanley Hall analyzed and reported on the results in the March issue. The report could be seen as a kind of educational profile. I should have presented some of these data earlier because they relate to the question of class size which I dealt with earlier. I apologize for this and defend my action on the ground that (a) they are excellent data, and (b) I will present them briefly, except those dealing with the extent of political influence in public education.

It turned out that classes were very large. In many states the average was almost sixty while the state with the lowest average was 34 (Arkansas). At the end of this section of his report Hall added, "Everywhere, of course, the number of pupils per teacher in city schools is greater than in country schools."³⁶ The replies also showed that a large

35. Op. Cit., Vol. X, No. 1, (January, 1895), p. 8.

36. G. Stanley Hall, Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 77 (March, 1896).

percentage of teachers, especially men, had left the profession in the past decade. The percentages ranged from thirty percent in New England to sixty-five percent in the Western states. The replies also showed that more than seventy-five percent of the teachers were under thirty-five years of age. The replies showed that salaries for teachers were very low and were a major cause of the large turnover. (I should perhaps point out here that in 1895, sixty-seven percent of the teachers employed in public schools were women.) The replies showed that in only a few places were the qualifications high and Hall stated that "a large proportion in all district schools are young girls, sixteen to twenty years of age, utterly untrained."³⁷ The data on promotions was not clear except that it was rare for an elementary teacher to be promoted to a high school. (High school teachers were always paid more than elementary school teachers in those days so such a transfer would have been a real promotion.)

Now to return to the question of political influence on the schools. The situation was so bad that Hall considered it one of the two outstanding evils which the inquiry brought out; the other was the poor quality of the normal schools and their products. I quote his report on political influence at length:

Very striking are the answers to the questions touching teachers' tenure of their positions and security from improper influences. In New England, percentages reporting improper influence are as follows by States: Maine 33 per cent, New Hampshire 9 per cent, Vermont 8 per cent, Massachusetts 17 per cent, Rhode Island none, and Connecticut 40 per cent. This evil is potent, however, for appointments rather than for removals. These bad influences are prominent in the following order: church, politics, personal favor, and whims of citizens

37. IBID.

and committees. The master of a grammar school writes strongly against the policy of placing schools in the hands of division committees. Their chairman, he says, is virtually the committee, and almost always lives in the district. The rules forbid the employment of non-resident teachers at anything but the minimum salary. He favors a wider range of choice, and thinks appointments should be made by a general committee advised by supervisor and principal. The system of annual elections is often commented on adversely.

In the Middle States, 9 per cent in New Jersey, 33 per cent in New York, 40 per cent in Delaware, and 50 per cent in Pennsylvania report improper influences. Some sad revelations appear in these returns. One teacher tells of an applicant who was 'asked, not as to his qualifications, but of the number of voters in his family.' Another writes that the friends of a schoolbook publishing house would 'drive out any teacher who would not favor their books.' The civil service regulations in New York have bettered the conditions; and a teacher who has had experience in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York says that, on the whole, New York teachers are far above the average in intelligence and professional spirit.

In some of the Southern States very evil influences are reported. In small towns in Alabama teachers are said to be both removed and appointed by favor; positions in some places are rarely held more than two terms, and some teachers take three different schools during the year. Lessons are short. 'In some counties the teachers are said to pay each member of the school board from \$2.50 to \$5 to keep their positions,' and 6 per cent report improper influence, as do 30 per cent in Georgia, 70 per cent in Kentucky, 25 per cent in Maryland, 40 per cent in Mississippi, 50 per cent in South Carolina and Tennessee, 45 per cent in Texas, 20 per cent in Virginia, and 60 per cent in West Virginia. In Kentucky, where teachers are commonly elected annually, 'when boards change politically, sweeping changes of teachers often follow.' In Mississippi teachers are said rarely to remain in positions more than one year. In Texas one teacher reports: 'If your school board are Democratic, the teachers are democratic; if Baptists, they must be Baptists.' In West Virginia it is said that requirements are neither rigid nor uniform. 'Politics is the bane of the school system; then comes personal favoritism. Colored teachers are special sufferers from politics.'

For the far Western States the report of improper influence is as follows: California 60 per cent, Colorado 60 per cent, North Dakota 100 per cent (only four reports), Oregon 40 per cent, Utah 60 per cent, Washington 60 per cent. In California the state law gives the teacher life tenure of office, but this law is said to be 'always evaded by politicians.' Good state laws are overcome by corrupt school boards. Teachers are said to be 'pliant, timid, and servile,'

and political 'pulls' are potent. One report says that teachers' boarding-places affect their security; another calls them 'cranks' and 'cowards.' Requirements are said to be 'wholly unpedagogical, absurd, and criminally careless.' In Colorado it is the same old story of the political 'pull.' Large cities seem freer from political influence than small towns. Local teachers are preferred to outsiders, which is a bad sign. In Idaho the condition looks bad, and personal favoritism is said to keep teachers in office. In Oregon, where tenure is uncertain and teachers are often elected annually, the main difficulty seems to be in security of tenure. In Utah one report says that positions in some places are solely dependent on political influence. In Washington a city superintendent says: 'We have practically no protection from political demagogues; this unfortunate condition is appalling in our Western country.' He says further that tenure of position is affected by 'personal friends and their influence, and by the lack of them.' 'We must trade with the merchants, bank with the bankers, take treatment of the doctors, consult the lawyers, connive with the politicians, and even go to school elections and work for the successful candidate.'³⁸

In the summer of 1896, the Atlantic Monthly carried another long article on the problem. This one was by a prominent superintendent of the Cleveland schools, Lewis H. Jones. Jones had been superintendent in Indianapolis and was largely responsible for the situation there which Joseph Rice praised so highly. At Cleveland he was the head of a school system in which the administrative arrangements became a center of controversy which I will describe in a later section. In this article Jones, drawing heavily and quoting extensively from G. Stanley Hall's article, gave the most powerful denunciation of politics in public education and the most alarming picture of its consequences that I have seen in all the material I have gone through. The article was entitled "The Politician and the School" and was both a severe criticism of politics in public education and a powerful argument for giving full power to the

38. IBID., pp 405 - 406.

superintendent of schools. I have selected statements from his article which show his opinion about politics and public education:

The unscrupulous politician is the greatest enemy that we now have to contend with in public education. His highest conception of the public school is that its revenues offer him the opportunity of public plunder. Did he accomplish his end without other injury to the cause of education than the depletion of its revenues, he might be ranked merely with the common thief. However, he does not confine his depredations to the financial side of the matter, but pushes his corrupting presence into the school itself. He commits the unpardonable sin when he interferes with the rightful tenure of office of the teacher, and seeks to make political reasons more effective than professional competency in securing and retaining teachers' positions. . .

It is true that many other unworthy influences operate in the employment and retention of incompetent teachers; but all other influences, either inside or outside the profession, dwindle into insignificance when compared with the baleful effects of partisan politics. . .

. . .The situation staggers belief. No one seems to grasp its real significance. It would be a serious problem if it were simply plundering the public treasury. Its evil would be beyond computation if it extended no farther than the corrupting, humiliating, and degrading of the men and women who teach in the schools, and who, though they are infinitely the superiors of the political bosses, must submit to the most galling indignities, or cease to follow their chosen profession. But the real enormity of the crime begins to dawn upon us when we consider that these political tricksters, who give positions to incompetent teachers in return for political support from the friends of such teachers, steal from defenseless children. The horrible accumulation of social consequences would appall us if it resulted only in deformed bodies and wasted intellectual energies. But the inevitable consequence of incompetence in the schoolroom is spiritual death to the children, the dwarfing of all noble purposes, the paralyzing of all high effort, the destruction of all elevated ideals, the gradual obliteration of all that makes life worth living. Herod killed the innocents, as he doubtless thought, to protect his throne. The modern politician murders the children for mere gain; and it does not seem to make much difference that his own children are among the number. Partisan politics is the most horrible curse that ever spread its blighting influence over the public schools.³⁹

39. IBID., L. H. Jones, "The Politician and the School", pp. 810 - 815.

The fact of political influence in the operation of the public schools continued to be brought to the attention of educators and laymen throughout the nineties. The Atlantic Monthly followed Superintendent Jones' article with one in July 1896, entitled "Confessions of Public School Teachers" in which the same story of patronage and political influence in the hiring and firing of teachers, the selection of school sites and the building of schools, and the selection and purchase of textbooks was reported. Two years later the same journal featured another article entitled "Confessions of Three School Superintendents" in which three superintendents from different sections of the country writing anonymously told their tale of woe. The third of these men who had served primarily in two large cities provided some details of how the system operated:

In the same city, where houses were erected by the school board and all contracts pertaining to the schools were awarded by the board, there was a temptation for a certain class of men to seek election to the board who could not be tempted into the public 'service' by any desire to advance the public interest. Some of them secured appointments upon the building committee. It was well known that bids for contracts were opened before all bids were handed in, and 'pointers' were given to late bidders. Some of these men were constantly found on the textbook committee, and agents of publishing houses had to meet them on ground sufficiently low to reach their official good will. In a certain book contest, one young, inexperienced agent told me he gave one member of the committee money to take a trip to the seashore. To gain the good will of another, he said he accompanied him not only to saloons, but to worse places.⁴⁰

What was the explanation for this situation which almost everyone agreed was a basic factor in undermining the quality of education,

40. IBID., "Confessions of Three School Superintendents", Vol. 82, (1898), p. 651.

especially in the cities? The answer, as Lucy Salmon, professor of history at Vassar and frequent contributor to education journals, pointed out, was that it was a part of the spoils system which prevailed in municipal governments generally in these years.⁴¹ The fact was, that during the height of the Jacksonian period, city charters were granted or rewritten to dispense power among a number of agencies making responsible democratic government difficult if not impossible. With no one responsible, a vacuum existed into which moved the political machine. These machines, writes historian Arthur Link, resembled the modern corporation in their hierarchical structure and he describes their structure and operation as follows:

In the bottom rank was the precinct captain, who organized a small district and dispensed small favors. Above him was the ward leader, or heeler, who was a lieutenant of the boss and helped to manage campaigns and run the machine. Often the ward heeler held important office, such as that of alderman or water commissioner. Together with the boss and his immediate assistants, ward leaders constituted the inner circle of the organization, called 'the ring.'

The head of the machine was known as the 'boss,' 'big man,' or 'leader.' Because of his generally unsavory reputation, he usually held no office. Almost invariably he had risen from the ranks after years of service. The boss operated like a general in charge of field forces. His orders were commands, passed down from the 'ring' to its hundreds or thousands of workers. Occasionally the boss's authority was challenged by a rising politician or faction in the machine; if tensions mounted too high the organization would split into rival factions. These were exceptional cases, however, for machines were usually superbly organized and smoothly run. They were the invisible governments of great cities, affecting the well-being of millions of people. . .

The machine survived even when forms of government were changed. A more important reason for its existence and power, therefore, was the fact that it rendered service to large numbers of people. The majority of voters in 1900 did not ask

41. Op. Cit., "Some Political Principles Applied to Education",

whether the organization was corrupt but whether it did something for them. . .

The system of police graft was everywhere prevalent, but the most dangerous kind of bribery was the money paid by businessmen for protection, special privileges, and public rights. To begin with, the great economic interests in the cities turned 'their dollars into votes and their property into political power' by buying control of the political machines. Corruption was inevitable so long as businessmen wanted exemption from equitable taxation. In addition, there were numerous opportunities in large and rapidly growing cities for bribery of another kind--purchase of franchises and contracts. New city railway lines had to be constructed; sewerage, gas, electrical, and water lines had to follow new areas of development. The boss usually had franchises and contracts at his disposal; even perpetual franchises could be bought. It was top-level bribery of this kind that was most dangerous to the public interest and most profitable to the machine.

This, therefore, was the 'System,' as Lincoln Steffens called it. This was the pattern of corruption that characterized American municipal politics at the turn of the century. Some cities, to be sure, outshone the others in refining the art of misgovernment. In St. Louis, for example, the Democratic boss systematically sold franchises, licenses, and exemptions to the respectable leaders of the business community. The boss of Minneapolis operated the most spectacular system of police graft in the country. In Pittsburgh two Republican leaders owned the city council and grew rich on contracts and utilities. Philadelphia presented the sorriest sight of all--a place where the citizens cheerfully acquiesced in the total subversion of representative government.⁴²

With a system so pervasive in city government generally it is not surprising that the spoils system should have operated in the public schools. It is true, of course, that the financial reward possible in the educational "racket" was not as great as in the purchase of the franchise of a public utility. Still, when large schools were being built and large numbers of textbooks were being purchased there were large sums of money to be made.

The problem of getting the schools out of this system of political

42. Op. Cit., pp. 81 - 83.

patronage and control was not to be solved in a year or two by the writings of reformers such as Joseph Rice, William Bruce, Lewis Jones or Lucy Salmon. It would not have been solved even with the power of the organized leadership of the education profession as manifested through the resolutions of its various committees. As I will show, the efforts by schoolmen did help but the major success was made possible by the tremendous efforts of the progressives after 1900.

This then concludes my brief account of the situation in the schools in 1900. What judgment can or should be made? One could agree with G. Stanley Hall when, after analyzing the results of the Atlantic Monthly survey, he cried out in dismay. The evils in the schools he said, "are very real, grave, and widespread; whether a trifle more or less so than these rough estimates make out is of small account. They stand out in gloomy contrast with the glorification of the perfections of our system commonly heard in teachers' meetings, and by many thought necessary to insure a continuation of school appropriations."⁴³

William Torrey Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, was more optimistic. Writing in 1900, in his monograph on elementary education for the Paris Exposition he conceded the shortcomings of the public schools. Still, he said, the schools had transformed an illiterate population into one that could at least read the newspapers and thus participate in the political life of the nation. More than that, he claimed that the schools had helped to promote domestic tranquility and social cohesiveness. The following quotation provides the essence of his view:

43. Op. Cit., p. 412.

That the public schools of cities have worked great and favorable changes to the advantage of civil order cannot be doubted. They have generally broken up the feuds that used to prevail between the people of different precincts. Learning to live without quarreling with school-fellows is an efficient preparation for an orderly and peaceful life with one's neighbors.

The rural school, with all its shortcomings, was, and is to-day, a great moral force for the sparsely settled regions, bringing together the youth of the scattered families, and forming friendships, cultivating polite behavior, affording to each an insight into the motives and springs of action of his neighbors, and teaching him how to co-operate with them in securing a common good.⁴⁴

B) The Struggle for Power between School Boards and Superintendents

As I stated earlier, the office of the city superintendent of schools was firmly established by 1895. It is also clear, and there is abundant evidence to support the fact, that superintendents had not, in most places, been given the authority by school boards that they (the superintendents) thought they needed. At the end of the section in which I traced the development of the superintendency up to the eighteen-nineties, I quoted William Mowry who described the situation in Boston and New England--a situation in which although in most cases school boards had hired superintendents they had not yet given them authority, and the crucial decisions were still being made by school boards, usually through standing committees.

In the preceding section of this report I described the conditions which existed in the public schools and especially in the city schools in the 1890's. Clearly, by almost any educational standard, conditions

44. Op. Cit., pp. 17 & 18.

were deplorable: poor, unhygienic facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate materials, and poorly trained, unsupervised teachers. And most important for our story was the fact that the important educational decisions were being made for the most part by school board members who were at worst politicians seeking their own gain and at best by well intentioned men who had neither the time nor the competence to make such decisions wisely.

The leaders in American education knew about the conditions in the public schools, and while they were not as concerned and disturbed about some of the conditions (e.g., the large classes) as we are today, probably because they were accustomed to large classes, they were concerned about the quality of teachers, the course of study, and in general about the operation of the schools. These leaders, and they included college presidents, such as Nicholas Murray Butler and Charles Eliot, college professors, such as Burke Hinsdale, and the leading superintendents of the time, such as William Maxwell and William T. Harris, had been discussing the problems of American education for years in educational journals and in the meetings of their national organization, the National Education Association. From discussion, they moved into action in the 1890's and the action took the form of a series of studies and reports of committees who studied various aspects of the educational situation and made recommendations to the profession and to the American public concerning them. The work of the famous Committee of Ten (1892) on secondary education is well known as is the Committee on College Entrance (1895). In this whole development the crucial problems of organization and administration, and especially those connected with the cities, were not neglec-

ted. The basic problem in this area was who would make the key educational decisions in the schools: the school boards or the superintendents. By key decisions I mean decisions concerning the hiring and firing of teachers, the selection of textbooks, and the course of study. Educators, of course, generally took the position that these decisions should be made by professional experts--in this case the superintendent and his staff (this did not include teachers) and not the school board. The problem, of course, was to convince school boards, who had the legal power to make these decisions, to turn this power over to superintendents.

The problem began receiving systematic attention in the National Education Association as early as 1880, when the National Council of Education was established. The Council consisted of sixty-five prominent members of the N. E. A. Its function was "the consideration and discussion of educational questions of general interest and public importance, and the presentation, through printed reports, of the substance of the discussions and the conclusions formulated." The Council created twelve standing committees, one of them on City School Systems. This Committee was charged with the responsibility of studying seven different aspects of the city systems. One of these was the organization of city schools and another was the superintendency. The Committee made several reports in the 1880's, and then presented its report on "School Superintendence in Cities" to the National Council at its annual meeting in July of 1890. The committee chairman was prominent educator Emerson E. White and the two other members were Burke A. Hinsdale and N. C. Dougherty. White at the time was superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, Ohio. He had been the president of Purdue University (1876-1883) and was well

known as an author. Hinsdale, who has already been introduced, was, in 1890, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Michigan. Dougherty was superintendent of schools in Peoria, Illinois.

In its report the Committee borrowed heavily from a speech that William H. Maxwell, superintendent of schools in Brooklyn, New York, had given the preceding February to the Department of Superintendence of the N.E.A. and, since this was so, it is necessary and desirable to give an account of Maxwell's speech and some of the very important discussions that followed it. Maxwell began by citing Herbert Spencer to show that as society evolved, its institutions required a specialization of function, and in education this meant that school boards had to give up several of the functions they had been assigned under "primitive" conditions.¹ Then in answering his own question as to whether the schools were not already being run by specialists (superintendents), he provided evidence of the situation in administration in city schools in 1890:

The functions of school officers are at best but advisory. Their best efforts may be nullified by the caprice or ignorance of those who hold the reins of authority. Under such a system the strongest and wisest of men may well grow weary of well-doing, and, instead of leading the vanguard of progress, content himself with trying to avert the dangers that continually threaten our public schools. Under such a system, the strongest and wisest of educators may be pardoned if he degenerates into a not ignoble specimen of arrested development.²

Despite this gloomy picture, Maxwell was optimistic. Some superintendents, at least, he said, were being listened to by school boards in forming

1. N. E. A. Proceedings, (1890), pp. 448 - 451.

2. IBID., p. 451.

the course of study and in appointing teachers. In these actions he found "the ground-plan for a complete differentiation of structures and a complete specialization of functions."³ Maxwell recommended that the states and not the local districts assume great responsibility in public education. The state should determine the course of study to be pursued in all the public schools; it should decide on the qualifications of teachers and superintendents and issue licenses to qualified persons for these jobs. The city superintendent, said Maxwell, should represent the state. He suggested that the city school board have the right to select its own superintendent but only from an approved list nominated by "State educational authorities." So far as tenure was concerned, Maxwell thought that the superintendent" should be appointed either for a long term of years, as are the judges of the supreme court, or should be appointed for life, and should be removable only by the state board of education, on complaint of a municipal or county board."⁴ As for boards, they should select all school sites, purchase all supplies except textbooks, and handle all business. The board should employ teachers and Maxwell thought they should be selected by the school principals. All of the purely educational work should be handled by the "scholastic officers."⁵

In the discussion that followed several superintendents spoke and their statements indicated that there was considerable disagreement over the basic issues. Superintendent H. S. Tarbell of Providence, Rhode

3. IBID.

4. IBID., p. 459.

5. IBID.

Island thought that Maxwell's centralized state control was "unnecessary" and would be "injurious." He also believed that school boards and not superintendents should select teachers and textbooks, but the question of how the texts should be used should be decided by the experts, i.e., the superintendents. Superintendent Aaron Gove of Denver followed Tarbell and agreed with him that teachers should be hired by the school board, and the reason he gave provides evidence that the vulnerability of superintendents, one of the critical problems down through the years and right to the present time, existed and superintendents were aware of it in 1890. Why should superintendents not appoint teachers? Here was Gove's answer:

The prejudices and embarrassments consequent upon local solicitation for appointments create a feeling in a community that seriously hampers the best efforts of the superintendent. The country furnishes abundant illustration of the folly of superintendents undertaking to direct appointments. It is another instance of good theory and bad practice; the outcome has usually been the dismissal of the superintendent.⁶

Two other prominent educators responded to William Maxwell's remarks. One was Emerson E. White, who has been introduced, and the other was Andrew Draper, state superintendent of public instruction in New York. Draper was subsequently to be superintendent of schools in Cleveland and he played a leading role in the struggle between school boards and superintendents. White was not willing to go as far as Maxwell suggested in granting power to the state although he believed the state had the "right and duty" to "provide and secure an efficient administration of the schools in these cities." But he fully endorsed Maxwell's other ideas as the following statements indicate:

6. IBID., p. 463.

I fully agree with the position of the paper respecting the necessity of differentiation and specialization in school administration. We have reached the point in the development of our school systems when school instruction and discipline should be clearly recognized as a special department of school administration. There is a widening opinion that boards of education, though thoroughly competent for the general management of schools, are not competent to prescribe courses of study and methods of instruction and discipline, or to determine the qualifications of teachers. These duties involve a knowledge of education, its principles, history, and conditions, which few men possess who are not professional experts; and hence it is that boards of education are increasingly committing these duties to the superintendent and his assistants. It would not be a very inconsiderate statement were I to assert that real progress in school instruction in our cities for the past twenty years has been largely the result of the efficiency and authority of school superintendents.

What experience has shown to be necessary and wise should now be recognized by the State in its organization of city school systems. The law should not only provide for school supervision, but the powers and duties of supervisory officers should be clearly defined. There should be "differentiation and specialization," to adopt the quoted language of the paper.

Permit me to add, that in my judgment the selection of teachers, the most important duty in school administration, should be vested, in some wise manner, in the superintendent of schools. What he is now really doing in many of our cities, under cover, should be done by authority of law, openly and with a full assumption of all the responsibility involved. There is a clear distinction between the selection and nomination of teachers and their employment. The superintendent's action should be subject to the approval of the board. The time has come when the supervision of schools should be specialized, and whatever the State decrees in this matter will meet with the approval of the people, whatever may be true of the ward politician. What the people want is good schools, and this requires a wise organization and efficient direction.⁷

Andrew Draper then took the floor. He thought that while it was desirable to have superintendents hire teachers the idea was not tenable, first, because he thought boards of education would not ordinarily yield power to superintendents, and second, because even if they did it would be unwise for superintendents to take it. Draper ended his statement

7. IBID., pp. 465 - 466.

with remarks that indicated that he wanted superintendents to have great power but that he thought it unwise for them to seek to employ teachers. Five years later Draper apparently had changed his mind, because in 1895 an important committee of which he was chairman came out strongly in favor of having superintendents select teachers. And in that year he even urged superintendents to risk dismissal in order to acquire power. But, as the following statement will indicate, in 1890, he agreed with Aaron Gove on the vulnerability of superintendents.

About one matter I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not in favor of limiting the authority of city superintendents. If I could, I would confer upon them much broader authority than they now have. I would give them almost autocratic powers within their sphere of duty and action, and then I would hold them responsible for results. After a teacher has once been appointed, I would have the superintendent utilize the services of that teacher in whatever grade he could to the best advantage. I would confer upon him the power to transfer a teacher from a lower grade to a higher, or from a higher grade to a lower, just as he thought best; but I am very confident in the opinion that it is impracticable, and that it is disastrous to his own efficiency, to arouse the antagonisms which are inevitably incident to the employment of teachers.⁸

Remember that all these remarks were made before superintendents from all over the country and, thus, the ideas were diffused throughout the nation.

The consideration of the problems connected with city school systems, which essentially boiled down to the question of trying to decide how much power the superintendents could wrest from school boards, was continued in the summer of 1890. In July, the Committee on City School Systems presented its report to the National Council of Education at the annual meeting of the National Education Association held in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Com-

8. IBID., p. 467. (Italics mine).

mittee followed William Maxwell in using the potent name of Herbert Spencer as an authority to bolster its case. In the first paragraph of the report the Committee stated: "Herbert Spencer confidently affirms that . . . 'a differentiation of structure and a specialization of function.' is the law of all growth and progress." This principle, the Committee said, could be clearly seen in government and in industry. On the basis of an examination of the development of both these institutions, it was clear that "the specialist is the most characteristic product of modern civilization."⁹

The Committee then launched into its main argument: there had been some progress toward differentiation and specialization of function in education, but the schools were far behind other institutions. As for school administration in cities--it was organized as it had been when cities were villages. The Committee was highly critical of school boards and William Maxwell was quoted as saying "the board of education serves several purposes and performs none of them well." The "primitive" arrangement of having school boards run the schools, the Committee reported, remained in effect in most cities despite its "known failure."¹⁰ They added that "there is not a progressive and advanced system of city schools which has been immediately administered by a board of education." The Committee hastened to add that this statement was not meant to question the intelligence or character of school board members in cities. They even went so far as to admit that:

9. IBID., p. 309.

10. IBID., p. 310.

If the members of this Council were organized as a board of education, they would not be able to administer efficiently a system of city schools. They would be obliged to commit executive and supervisory duties to a superintendent, and, if as wise as they are believed to be, they would also commit corresponding executive powers.¹¹

The Committee followed Maxwell's approach of stressing the fact that while conditions were bad there was room for hope, because some school boards at least had taken the very wise step of letting the superintendent and his staff run the school. This line of argument or persuasion with its optimistic note, as well as, the objective of educators in their struggle with school boards, comes out clearly in the following passages from the report:

This failure of the primitive organization is attested by the actual administration of public schools in cities. Boards of education have increasingly realized that they are not competent to perform wisely all of the duties imposed upon them by the law, and especially that they are not competent for the efficient discharge of those executive functions that are connected with school instruction and discipline including the selection and assignment of teachers, the preparation of courses of study, the selection of text-books, the promotion and classification of pupils, and the immediate direction of methods of teaching and discipline.

It may be true that the great majority of school boards have not a very lively appreciation of their incompetency in these directions; but the encouraging fact is, that an increasing number of boards are committing these supervisory and executive duties to superintendents and principals, and this delegation of administrative duties is now authorized in several States, and in at least one instance is required by State law. The office of superintendent of schools now exists in nearly all of our cities, and the superintendent has generally the oversight, if not direction, of school instruction and discipline. In many cities his advice at least is sought with reference to proposed changes in the course of study or text-books, the grading of pupils, the selection and assignment of teachers, etc.; and, in a few of the more progressive cities, the superintendent really

11. IBID., p. 311.

determines all of these matters. It is true that this is usually done under the cover of a committee--a convenient hiding-place from criticism, and an easy escape from responsibility. But the promising fact is, that a few superintendents are such de facto, if not de jure, and the schools under them have the full benefit of their experience and skill. The success of such real supervision will be questioned by no one familiar with school progress. The most notable examples of marked progress in city schools have been due to the wise commitment of their management to a superintendent selected because of his known ability, not merely "to run schools," but to devise, organize, direct, and make successful a rational system of instruction. The naming of half a dozen cities would not only make clear our meaning, but it would establish the truth of our position.

The reason for this fact is plain. Education as an art is based primarily on the educable nature of the child, and hence the determining and direction of courses and methods of instruction and discipline require an intimate knowledge of the ends, means, and conditions of child-training. The time is clearly past when men who have no special knowledge of the science or art of education can be wisely intrusted with the difficult duties involved in the development and direction of a system of schools; and this fact is more and more clearly recognized by the public, and especially by school patrons. While the progress made in these directions may be small, the encouraging fact is that few steps backward have been taken.¹²

The Committee then went back to the negative side of the story. In most school systems school boards had been more willing to impose duties on superintendents "than to delegate to them corresponding authority." In practice they said this amounted to having superintendents working "under the direction, and often the instruction of its several committees." To show the harmful effects of this arrangement, they quoted William Maxwell's statement made in February to the effect that school boards had not given their school officers authority, and the result was that even some of the strongest and wisest of superintendents gave up and degenerated

12. IBID., pp. 311 - 312.

into a "not ignoble specimen of arrested development." The Committee added that "it certainly would not be difficult to select from the hundreds of cities in the country a somewhat imposing exhibit of these 'specimens'."¹³

After this series of arguments and statements both positive and negative, the Committee made its recommendations:

It is the belief of your committee that the experience of the cities of the country now affords a sufficient basis for the wise application of Mr. Spencer's vital law of progress to school administration; that the time has fully come for the differentiation of the department of school supervision and its organization with well-defined functions and powers. Here is the opportunity and the promise of a much-needed reform in school organization. The more-important duties which have been increasingly committed to superintendents, directly or indirectly, are the direction and improvement of school instruction and discipline; and, to this end, the training and stimulating of principals and teachers, the arranging and perfection of courses of study, the selection of text-books and teaching appliances, the promotion and classification of pupils, and last, but not least, the selection and assignment of teachers. As already shown, there are scores of city superintendents who, with the help and counsel of their assistants, are now performing more or less fully these duties. What is now needed is the adding of responsibility to duty, the specialization and authorization of these supervisory functions by law.

The details of such legislation cannot be wisely settled in this paper, since the same details in all cities are not possible, even if desirable. Successful methods of school administration have not only a vital principle, but usually a historic root. The essential condition of progress is the successful grafting of the former upon the latter. The vital principle in this much-needed reform in school administration, for which your committee pleads, is that the superintendent of schools be clothed with initiator power in each of the above-named executive functions. He must not only be permitted to make suggestions and recommendations, but the responsibility of school progress must be laid squarely upon him. It must be made his recognized duty to train teachers and inspire them with high ideals; to revise the course of study when new light shows that improvement is

13. IBID., p. 312.

possible; to see that pupils and teachers are supplied with needed appliances for the best possible work; to devise rational and helpful methods of promoting pupils, thus protecting teachers and pupils from the narrowing, grooving, and otherwise vicious influence of the 'stated examination grind'; and especially, as essential to the highest success, to see that the schools are in the hands of the best available teachers.

Whether or not his work as an expert in these executive directions is to be subject to the approval of the board of education is not so important as the one essential condition of progress, to wit, that the taking of the initiative be his right and duty. He should no longer be required or permitted to hide behind school committees. His work as superintendent should bear the light, and he should be responsible for it. Responsibility and duty should be fully conjoined in the supervisory office.¹⁴

The Committee on City School Systems concluded its report by pointing out that it had not had the time to deal with some very important items, such as the qualifications of superintendents or the very important and crucial question of their tenure in office. But on the latter point they did have this to say:

It must suffice to say that the superintendent should be made an authorized and recognized school officer, and he should be chosen in a manner consistent with the dignity and high duties of the position; and his tenure of office should be made sufficiently secure to enable him to serve the schools and the public in accordance with his best judgment and power--and, to these ends, his appointment and continuance in office should, in some practical way, be placed beyond the control of the ward politician whose self-assumed function is to attend to other people's business in public affairs.¹⁵

In the discussion which followed the Committee's report, it was clear that there was sharp disagreement among the country's leading superintendents, and as a group they were not yet ready to attempt to move school

14. IBID., pp. 312 - 313.

15. IBID., p. 315.

boards out of the most important educational decisions. This fact had come out in the discussion following William Maxwell's speech before the Department of Superintendence in February and it had not changed by July.

As in February, it was Aaron Gove, superintendent at Denver, Colorado, (who was a member of the standing committee of the National Council on City School Systems but who did not sign the report) who led the opposition. Gove contended that "the report puts the superintendent in the position of being a dictator" and he disagreed with the idea that boards of education were incompetent to make educational decisions. He argued that the "board of education of the city of the present . . . is quite as generally competent in all school duties as is the superintendent of the present." Gove also objected to the effort of the Committee to separate the school board and the superintendent. His view was that they were inseparable in the "well managed cities."¹⁶ Gove continued to champion and defend school boards, perhaps because of the nature of his experience with them in Denver. It also seems to have been good strategy. Whereas many vigorous supporters of the idea of increased power for superintendents lost their jobs, Gove remained on the job in Denver for thirty years--until he retired in 1904.

Emerson E. White then arose to defend the report. He denied that the report "even suggests that the superintendent should usurp or assume powers or duties: that he should in any sense be a dictator." On the contrary, he said, the report recommended that powers be "expressly delegated to him."¹⁷

16. IBID., p. 316, (Italics mine).

17. IBID., p. 317.

Then William Torrey Harris, at this time United States Commissioner of Education and probably the most prominent educator in the country, threw his weight behind Gove and against the recommendations of the Committee. Harris admitted that the administration of city schools was not perfect but he said "arbitrary authority of the superintendent is not the best method to improve it." His position, like Gove's, was that the superintendent should work closely with the board and "serve as the unifying center of all the educational forces."¹⁸

Louis Soldan then took the floor and repeated the interesting point made by Aaron Gove and Andrew Draper at the February meeting regarding the danger of giving superintendents the right to select teachers. (Soldan at this time was principal of the high school and the normal school in St. Louis. He was appointed superintendent of schools in St. Louis in 1895 and served until his death in 1908.) Noting that one of the purposes of the report was to improve the tenure of superintendents, he argued that giving them the power to select teachers would have just the opposite effect. There was, he said, "no part of the school administration in which there is more friction than in the appointment of teachers and other officers. If the superintendent makes these appointments, his tenure will be diminished."¹⁹ This is pretty good evidence, I think, that 1) school board members did appoint teachers, and that 2) there was an element of political patronage in the appointments (or else why the problem), and 3) that superintendents were well aware of their vulnerability even in 1890.

18. IBID., p. 318.

19. IBID., p. 319.

There was one other interesting and significant point raised in the discussion following the Committee's report. The point was raised by Josiah L. Pickard, at one time superintendent of schools in Chicago and later President of the State College of Iowa from 1878-1887 and well-known author of a book on supervision. Pickard asked why the Committee limited its recommendation to giving the superintendent initiating powers in matters of appointment. In other words, why not have superintendents make the appointments--period. White's reply was that it was limited because "he knew the Council to be too conservative to go further than this at this time."²⁰ I think that considering the response of Gove and Harris especially to the report, that it is clear that White was right.

This ended for the time being the consideration of the problem of strengthening the position of the superintendent vis-à-vis the school board. As White said, the Council was not ready, and there is no way of telling how long it would have taken to get them ready if it had not been for Joseph Mayer Rice. As I will show shortly, his report proved what many superintendents knew, i.e., that operation of the schools by committees of board members was hurting education. His reports provided evidence that Maxwell and White and Mowry were right and they provided evidence of it not only to educators but to school board members and to the lay public. It was, I think, no coincidence that the Department of Superintendence of the N. E. A. initiated its boldest effort to seize control of the schools almost immediately after the first of Rice's articles appeared in the Forum.

20. IBID., (Italics mine).

The struggle between school boards and superintendents broke out into an open battle in 1895. It was, I think, the boldest attack ever made by administrators as a group upon school boards, and if it had succeeded, American education would have been far different in the twentieth century. The basic issue in the conflict was: who would run the schools? When the smoke had cleared it was obvious that, while the superintendents had made significant gains, they had not won a clear-cut victory. There was a compromise settlement which was worked out first in discussions at professional meetings and in professional journals and then, in thousands of school districts all over the country. Some agreement was reached between both groups, in principle at least, on several of the major issues, but on some others there was disagreement and subsequent failure to solve basic problems.

Why should the battle have erupted in 1895, and how was it fought and by whom? As far as the timing is concerned, I think it was greatly influenced by the work of Joseph Mayer Rice. Remember that his work had been published in a popular journal in 1892 and 1893. He found the schools to be, with exceptions, in miserable shape. Rice believed there were many factors responsible for this situation, but one of the most important (and the one germane to this topic) was the operation of the schools by school boards. In some places, he said, board members used the schools for their own selfish or political gain. In others, they thought of themselves as educators and actually tried to run the schools. He urged that the schools be taken out of the hands of politics and turned over to competent educators. To do this, he thought

it would be necessary for Americans to rouse themselves to elect good school board members who would hire a competent superintendent and then give him "a sufficient amount of independent power to enable him to improve the schools in any manner that may to him seem fit."²¹ Wherever he had found good schools, he said, these conditions had existed.

Educators had mixed reactions to Rice and his work. Nobody likes to be criticized publicly, and Rice had not only done this but done it in a detailed way. Then too, he was an outsider. But he could not be ignored. He was, after all, a professional person; he did know something about education and he had actually spent six months visiting schools. And superintendents would have to admit that he had helped their cause. He did this not only by criticizing school boards but by his strong statements, first about the importance of the office of the superintendent, and then about the conditions essential to its effective operation.

There is no doubt, I think, that given the incompetence and corruption of school board members, sooner or later efforts at reform would have been made. And given the increasing size and complexity of the educational system, sooner or later school board members would have had to have turned the educational job over to educators. In either case, educators and especially school administrators would probably have had to take action and to take action they would probably have had to have been aroused. There is no way of telling how long it would have taken for the frustration of school administrators to build up to the point where they would act. Rice started it and he might have been the original muckraking

21. Joseph M. Rice, The Public School System of the United States, (New York, 1893), p. 19.

journalist. He made educators and the country aware of the nature and extent of the problem. And he helped create a climate in which change, even dramatic change, might be possible. School administrators took advantage of that climate and gradually were able to change their situation for the better, and if it had not been for one man they might have achieved a dramatic total victory in their struggle with school boards.

The first of Rice's articles on conditions in the city schools appeared in October of 1892 and the last in June of 1893. He included his criticisms of school boards and his recommendations for strengthening the superintendency in the first article. In February of 1893--three months later--a committee of prominent school administrators was appointed by the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association to study and make recommendations on three problems: the correlation of studies; the training of teachers; and the organization of city school systems. This was the famous Committee of Fifteen. The Committee was divided into three sub-committees of five men. The sub-committee on the organization of city school systems was chaired by Andrew S. Draper, superintendent of schools in Cleveland, and it reported in February of 1895 to the N.E.A. Perhaps Draper would have been appointed in any case, but it seems significant that he was one of the schoolmen praised by Rice.²² By the time of its 1894 meeting, the Committee had developed a set of questions to guide each sub-committee in its work. The questions to Draper's Committee provide evidence about the nature of the problems which educators faced and they also show that these were not timid, cautious men--

22. IBID., p. 227.

they were not afraid to ask really basic questions as the very first question on the list will indicate. The questions included the following:

Should there be a board of education, or a commissioner with an advisory council?

If a commissioner, should he be elected by the people, or appointed by the mayor, or selected in some other way?

What should be his powers and duties?

If a board of education, of how many members should it consist?

Should the members be elected or appointed? From the city at large or to represent districts?

By what authority should the superintendent of schools be elected or appointed? and for what term?

Should the city superintendent owe his appointment directly or indirectly to the state educational authorities, and be responsible to them rather than to the local authorities?

In whom should be vested the power to appoint teachers? In whom the power to discharge teachers?

By whom should the course of study be made?

By whom should promotions be made?²³

In its report the Committee did not recommend the elimination of school boards but it came very close to it, especially when it strongly endorsed the Cleveland Plan.²⁴ The recommendations, if they had been

23. Op. Cit., (1895), pp. 234 - 235, (Italics mine).

24. The editor of The American School Board Journal printed the following description of the Plan which had been published in a "Handbook of the Cleveland Board of Education."

"On March 18, 1892, the General Assembly of Ohio passed an act providing for the reorganization of the board of education of Cleveland. Under this act all legislative authority is vested in a school council of only seven members at large, and all executive authority is vested in a school director. The school director appoints all subordinates. The Superintendent of instruction is appointed by the school director, and may be removed by him for cause. The Superintendent of instruction shall have

followed, would have virtually turned the schools over to the superintendent and his staff.

In order to appreciate the significance of the report of the Draper Committee it is necessary to consider the way it was brought into existence, its membership, and also its position in the unique pattern of educational policy development that had taken place in the United States. The Committee of Fifteen was appointed by the most prestigious group in American education and its membership consisted of some of the most prominent men in American education. Superintendent William H. Maxwell of Brooklyn, New York, was chairman and some of the others were: United States Commissioner of Education and prominent educator and philosopher, William T. Harris; Superintendent T. M. Balliet of Springfield, Massachusetts; Superintendent L. H. Jones of Indianapolis; Superintendent Edward Brooks of Philadelphia; and Superintendent J. M. Greenwood of Kansas City. The membership of the sub-committee on city school organization consisted of: (in addition to Draper) Superintendents W. B. Powell of Washington, D. C.; A. B. Poland of Trenton, New Jersey; Edwin P. Seaver of Boston, Massachusetts and Albert G. Lane of Chicago, Illinois. An impressive committee and an impressive chairman.

Andrew Draper, the chairman, had been trained in the law and practiced law, he had served on the school board in Albany, New York and in the state legislature. In 1886, he was appointed superintendent of public

the sole charge to appoint and discharge all assistants and teachers authorized by the council to be employed." This was followed by a strong editorial criticism of the Plan. Vol. XI, (December, 1895), p. 10.

instruction in New York where he exerted vigorous leadership in using the state power to improve education. He succeeded in gaining increased appropriations and installed an examination system for licensing teachers. His party lost control of the legislature in 1892 and he lost his position and accepted the superintendency at Cleveland, Ohio. In 1894, he was moved to the presidency of the University of Illinois. In 1904, the state of New York reorganized its educational structure putting the schools under the Board of Regents, and Draper was appointed the State Commissioner of Education. It is not surprising, I think, that with such a man as chairman the report of the sub-committee on city school organization and administration was a vigorous and forthright report.

The Draper Committee had the full benefit of the impact of Joseph Rice's work in its two years of existence. As I stated, Rice's articles made the public aware that something had to be done and it certainly must have encouraged educators to be more bold. But I do not want to give the impression that Rice alone was responsible. For example, between the time the Draper Committee was formed in February of 1893 and the time the Report was issued late in February of 1895, there were at least two major public statements which dealt extensively with the relationship between school boards and superintendents, and although one of the statements was very much stronger and more forthright, both ended up recommending that the schools be turned over to the professional expert--the superintendent of schools.

Both statements appeared as articles in what was probably the most prominent educational journal of the time--Nicholas Murray Butler's Educational Review. The first article by prominent educator Burke A. Hinsdale,

Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Michigan, appeared in January, 1894. The second article by William A. Mowry, prominent both as an educator and a school board member in New England, appeared in January of 1895. In his article (which I referred to earlier) entitled "The American School Superintendent", Hinsdale gave a brief account of the history of the superintendency in which he stressed the increasing impossibility of operating the schools by committees of board members and the increasing tendency toward placing power in the hands of a superintendent. Hinsdale discussed many aspects of the job, but in this context two of his recommendations are pertinent. One, which was really not a recommendation but a statement that he regarded as fact, was that superintendents had no power except that delegated to them by the school board. I think it is clear that his statement on this relationship was a conservative one which probably tended to restrain superintendents:

Perhaps it is commonly supposed that the superintendent is an evolution from the teaching corps. If so, there could not be a greater mistake. He came forth from the school committee or board, as the history plainly shows. As a person he may have been taken from the teachers, and commonly, though not always, he has been; but his official duties originated in the delegation to him of powers every one of which once belonged to the board and that the board still often exercises. Nay, more; in most cases where a superintendent is employed, the board could dispense with him and assume, or resume, the general charge and superintendence of the schools itself, if it saw fit. It is important to remember the origin of the superintendency and the source of its powers. To quote Superintendent Stockwell of Rhode Island: 'It is extremely unfortunate for the welfare of our schools that, in the development in our State of the work and status of the superintendent of schools, the idea should have been allowed to gain a foothold that the office was in any way independent of the school committee, or the occupant thereof was responsible to any other than the committee, for the whole theory of the office and of its duties has ever been to make it the medium of the committee's actions, to give opportunity for so unifying and simplifying the work of the committee, as to make it more effective in every respect, and thus to afford a constant

and suitable medium for the expression of their will.²⁵

Then, at a later point in the article, he again stresses the power of the local board and the weakness of the superintendent's position.

As a matter of course the superintendent's duties are defined in the rules and regulations of the board electing him and creating his office. His status is determined by the manual, and not by the statute-book. There can, I think, be little doubt that the superintendent of the future will have a better defined legal status than the superintendent of the present. And yet, in the nature of the case, details must always be left to the local authorities.²⁶

So in Hinsdale's view the board had the power, and he raises no question in his article that this arrangement was not desirable. His opinion was that as time passed the school boards would increasingly delegate powers to the superintendent. "The good of the schools" he said, "demands professional supervision." And he thought the issue was not in doubt because such a step was "a dictate of the highest wisdom." What duties specifically would the boards in their wisdom turn over to superintendents? Hinsdale listed four: the control of the course of study, the selection of textbooks, "large control" over the selection and control of the teaching force (although he concedes this power is fraught with danger) and the professional supervision of teachers and teaching. Earlier in the article Hinsdale had stated that "the position calls for a man of gigantic mental and moral force." I think that considering the institutional structure in which Hinsdale had him working, and remembering the situation in the schools, this statement was true. In summary,

25. Educational Review, January 1894, p. 46.

26. IBID., pp. 48 - 49.

Hinsdale's voice was a powerful conservative voice and his suggestion of giving the superintendent more authority but keeping real and ultimate power in the hands of the school board was the pattern that eventually prevailed in public education.

A year later, in January of 1895, just a month before the Draper Report was given, the other major article on the superintendency appeared in the Educational Review. I introduced its author, William A. Mowry, and the article itself earlier in the course of providing evidence that the superintendents had not been given the authority to make the basic educational decisions in the schools, and that this authority was being exercised by standing committees of the school board.²⁷ Although Mowry does not mention Hinsdale or his article, he is in direct disagreement with him on some basic issues.

The reader will remember that William Mowry had been both a schoolman and a school board member (in Boston), so his words carried extra weight. In the article he traced the history of the school board or school committee from its origin in seventeenth century New England down to 1895, and then made a lengthy and powerful plea for placing great power in the hands of the superintendent. His argument was that the school board had served a useful function. But times had changed and as cities grew a new development occurred--cities "appointed school superintendents, men of ability and learning, and men of professional standing and experience, who had made a careful study of education, both as a science and as art."²⁸

27. Cf. pp. 23 - 25 of this report.

28. Op. Cit., "Powers and Duties of School Superintendents", Vol. IX, p. 39.

The trouble was that school boards had not been willing to delegate authority to these men. Mowry devotes pages to a description of the absurdity of the situation in Boston and claimed that the same pattern prevailed throughout New England. His explanation for this condition was a classic one. "Everyone knows," he said, "how reluctant men are to give up authority when once they have secured it, however, small or brief it may be."²⁹ He laughed at the notion proposed by Hinsdale that reliance be placed on having local boards give up authority voluntarily.

But it may still be contended by some that the present arrangement answers the purpose equally well. The school committees have the power, and they delegate this power to the superintendent. Observe for a moment what such a statement implies. For centuries all the power needed for the care and supervision of the schools was vested in the committees. It is admitted that this plan was at that time a tolerably good one under the circumstances; it is equally obvious to the citizens of Massachusetts to-day that, under the now existing circumstances, another plan is far better.

Psychology, pedagogy, the study of the child mind, new methods, new arts and devices in teaching, have so arisen and have received such attention that to secure the best results to-day, professional experts, who have made a study of these subjects, and who have had the necessary training and experience, must be placed in charge of the schools. This, I say, is clearly seen and acknowledged on all sides. This conviction has been embodied in carefully considered laws which have been enacted by the Great and General Court, establishing a system of professional superintendence of schools of the State, towns as well as cities. Having taken this step, will anyone claim that the State should stop there and leave the committees in the several towns full power to carry out the law or to ignore it? to make the superintendent an efficient, active force, or to minimize his efficiency by delegating to him the smallest possible power and least possible responsibility? For years a school committeeman has had charge of a particular school, and that school has come to be, to him, a pet. Will he willingly give it up to a stranger who happens to be chosen as superintendent? Again, the average school committeeman may have, as has elsewhere been said or sung,

29. IBID., p. 40.

'His sisters and his cousins,
Whom he reckons up by dozens,
And his aunts';

to say nothing of his wife's relatives who, possibly, may be equally numerous. In the natural course of human events some of these might desire a position as school-teacher.³⁰

Mowry wanted the States, and particularly the State of Massachusetts, to take certain legal educational powers which had been given to school boards out of their hands and given to the superintendents. He pointed out that in a recent pamphlet published on school laws in Massachusetts, more than forty pages were devoted to the powers and duties of school boards, while only one duty was assigned by state law to the superintendent--that of signing certificates enabling the child to be lawfully employed.³¹

Specifically, Mowry spelled out the educational matters concerning which the superintendent had by state law, no power; they were:

1. The examination and appointment of teachers; 2. Conditions of health in the schools; 3. Text-books and text-book changes; 4. Books for supplementary use; 5. Examination of pupils for promotion; 6. Qualifications for certificates for graduation from grammar and high schools; 7. Courses of study; 8. Arrangement of grades and classes; 9. Settling of cases of discipline; 10. Suspension and expulsion of pupils; 11. In general the control and management of the schools and the guiding and directing public policy and methods of teaching in the public schools.³²

In making his case for granting great power to the superintendent, Mowry pulled out all the stops. He not only used the argument contained in the quotation I used earlier, that advances in psychology and pedagogy

30. IBID., pp. 47 & 48.

31. IBID., p. 46.

32. IBID., pp. 48 & 49.

had provided the basis for professional experts, he also used the business model, so powerful in an increasingly business society. This borrowing of the business-industrial model and applying it to education was to be used increasingly, and it became something of a mania after 1910 as I have shown in Education and the Cult of Efficiency. So far as I know, this was the first time it was used in education. Mowry stated it this way:

It ought to need no argument to show that the schools of a great commonwealth should be managed on business principles. But would the directors of a cotton mill, a woolen mill, a machine shop, a railroad corporation or other business which employs a large number of workmen, undertake to dictate to their superintendent, in detail, what he must and must not do? Could they understand the complicated business as well as he? If so, why employ him at all? No! They place the business in his hands, give him all necessary power, and hold him responsible for results. Nor would any competent superintendent submit to such dictation. What, then, is absolutely necessary for the greatest success in business is equally necessary in the schools.

Can any possible reason be found why an exception should be made in the case of the management of the schools of a State, except the historical condition already considered, which, indeed, is no reason, but only the explanation of how it has happened to be?³³

Mowry's last sentence was an obvious reply to Hinsdale who had argued that power should be in the hands of the school board and delegated to the superintendent because that was the way it was in the beginning.

Not content with the business-industrial analogy, Mowry went on to use another potent one--Harvard University. Discussing the fact that the school systems had been excepted when it came to placing power in the hands of a single chief executive, he said:

. . .This exception is all the more conspicuous when we consider the methods everywhere prevailing in our colleges, professional schools, academies, and other institutions of learn-

33. IBID., p. 49.

ing. The trustees of Harvard University, for example, place the executive and administrative management of that institution in the hands of President Eliot, under certain general rules for his guidance, and these trustees expect good results, and that without such interference and dictation from the trustees as is sometimes so conspicuous in the relations existing between school committees and superintendents.³⁴

After finishing his analysis, Mowry raised the question of what should be done and then made the following recommendations:

1. It is high time that some underlying principles should be agreed upon in regard to the distinct and separate powers and duties of school committees and superintendents.
2. The office of the school committee has its own legitimate functions, and should not be underrated; but, on the other hand, if the usefulness of superintendents has been fully established and their necessity granted, their powers and duties should be carefully defined by law.
3. The school committee should have full powers in regard to municipal school legislation, full charge of building school-houses, keeping them in repair, hiring janitors, electing teachers (when nominated by the superintendent), making rules for governing the schools, and whatever should be decided by the direct representatives of the people. But, on the other hand, the superintendent should have his place assigned, and by the State law the limits of his powers so fixed that there shall be no trespassing by the other party upon either his field or that of the committee. He should be the executive and administrative officer. In this administration of affairs, whatever experience and good judgment dictate should be carried out and under definite and well-defined laws.
4. Another important conclusion to which we are driven by the logic of events is that the appointment of the superintendent should be permanent and not annual or biennial. The statutes of Massachusetts 'provide that the school committee of any town or city may elect any duly qualified person to serve as a teacher in the public schools of such city or town during the pleasure of such committee; provided such person has served as a teacher in the public schools of such city or town for a period of not less than one year.' If this is a wise provision for teachers, surely it is at least equally wise for the superintendent. The superintendent of a manufacturing establishment is not subject to annual re-election. Why, then, should the more important office of superintendent of schools

34. IBID.

be subject to such a precarious condition?³⁵

No doubt about it, Mowry saw the problems, including the problem of tenure. But in retrospect, it must be said that he did not confront the issue realistically. He obviously had great faith in laws and especially state laws. But while the record shows that most of what Mowry advocated was gradually adopted in American education either through state law or the rules of school boards, the record also shows that no matter how precisely functions or duties or responsibilities of school boards and superintendents are prescribed, as long as the board retained the power of appointment and dismissal of the superintendent, it could, in effect, control all the other functions regardless of statute. Mowry did not really confront this basic question.

At the end of his article he did two interesting things. First, he pointed out that the step he had recommended had already been taken in Cleveland and Cincinnati with, he said, "good results."³⁶ In doing this, he aligned himself with the supporters of the Cleveland Plan in that great debate. Of course, the debate did not begin until William Bruce launched his attack on the Cleveland Plan a few months later. The other thing Mowry did was to equivocate a bit by lauding the Denver system where Aaron Gove, the superintendent who championed the side of school board power, was superintendent. Said Mowry:

. . . Denver, Colo., while still holding the power in the hands of a small board of education, consisting of only six members, practically has put its schools in the hands of the efficient

35. IBID., pp. 50 & 51.

36. IBID., p. 51.

superintendent, who for many years has been eminently successful, and who has brought the schools of that city to a high position of usefulness and eminent success.³⁷

Conceding this success, however, he still believed that the best approach was through a series of state laws in which the duties and responsibilities of school boards and superintendents would be clearly spelled out.

This then was the background or setting for the Draper Report. The timing of the Mowry article is interesting. It came out one month before the Department of Superintendence meeting in late February and it was almost certainly read by the leading superintendents at least. As we shall see, it contained practically all the points which were recommended by Draper and his Committee. Mowry had to be an influential person, having been a prominent schoolman and prominent school board member. Was this article deliberately planted? Was this a behind the scenes effort by Nicholas Murray Butler, editor of the Educational Review, to make educators more ready to accept the recommendations in the Report? Butler had been known to operate in this way before. Or was the timing of the article sheer coincidence? I would need to check Butler's papers and writings and the Draper papers which are at the University of Illinois.

I don't know anything about the work of the Draper Committee except that it had certain guidelines provided by the questions submitted to them in 1894 by the larger Committee of which they were a part.³⁸ I assume that Draper dominated his sub-committee. He was a strong man, he had been a strong superintendent at Cleveland and he was at the time President of

37. IBID., p. 51.

38. See pp. 83 & 84.

the University of Illinois. But I will need to check Draper's papers to see if these questions can be answered.

The Committee began its report by stating that its task was to "treat of school systems which were so large that persons chosen by the people to manage them and serving without pay cannot be expected to transact all the business of the system in person or to have personal knowledge of all business transactions."³⁹ Then they pointed out that no plan or organization alone would suffice for good schools. If the people of a city did not want good schools, and were not willing to work to get them, nothing could be done. But given communities where this interest and concern did exist, a proper organization could become the instrument whereby good schools were developed.

The Committee believed that the administrative duties "naturally and quickly" separated themselves into two great departments: "one which manages the business offices and the other which supervises the instruction." These departments should be headed by full-time persons and the head of the instructional staff had to be a "competent educational expert." In both departments there had to be "adequate authority and quick public accountability." The Committee then stressed the need to discriminate between the legislative and the executive functions in organizing and administering the schools. The legislative function should be handled by a small board appointed by the mayor of the city. Its job would be to determine and direct the general policy of the school system. It should have power to levy taxes, and raise revenue, and control expend-

39. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1895, p. 375.

itures, and should make no appointments in the business department "other than its own clerk." The entire operation should be "absolutely emancipated from partisan politics and completely dissociated from municipal business."

But the Committee went beyond these recommendations and suggested that a school director be appointed. In this the Committee was recommending the Cleveland arrangement. The Committee presented its reason for this recommendation and then described the job as follows:

We think it an excellent plan to provide for two branches and sets of powers in the board of education; the one to have the veto power or at least to act as a check upon the acts of the other. This may be accomplished by creating the office of school director and charging the incumbent with executive duties on the business side of the administration, and by giving him the veto over the acts of the other branch of the board, which may be called the school council. Beyond the care and conservatism which are insured by two sets of powers acting against each other, this plan has the advantage of giving the chief executive officer of the system just as high and good a title as that of members of the board; it is likely to secure a more representative man, and gives him larger prerogatives in the discharge of his executive duties and better standing among the people, particularly among the employes and teachers associated with the public school system.

If this plan is adopted, the school director should be required to give his entire time to the duties of his position and be properly compensated therefor. He should be the custodian of all property and should appoint all assistants, janitors, and workmen authorized by the board for the care of this property. He should give bond with sufficient sureties and penalties for the faithful and proper discharge of all his duties. He should be authorized by law to expend funds, within a fixed limit, for repairs, appliances, and help, without the action of the board. All contracts should be made by him and should run in his name, and he should be charged with the responsibility of seeing that they are faithfully and completely executed. All contracts involving more than a limited and fixed sum of money should be let upon bids to be advertised for and opened in public. He should have a seat in the board of education; should not vote but should have the power to veto, either absolutely or conditionally, any of the acts of the board through a written communication. This officer and the school council should together constitute the board of education.

The board of education should be vested only with legislative functions and should be required to act wholly through formal and recorded resolutions. It should determine and direct the general policy of the school system. Within reasonable limits as to amount, it should be given power, in its discretion, to levy whatever moneys may be needed for school purposes. It should control the expenditure of all moneys beyond a fixed and limited amount, which may safely and advantageously be left to the discretion of the chief executive business officer. It should authorize, by general resolutions, the appointment of necessary officers and employees in the business department, and of the superintendent, assistants, and teachers in the department of instruction, but it should be allowed to make no appointments other than its own clerk. With this necessary exception, single officers should be charged with responsibility for all appointments.

This plan, not in all particulars but in the essential ones, has been on trial in the city of Cleveland, Ohio, for nearly three years, and has worked with very general acceptability. If this plan is adopted, the chief executive officer of the system is already provided for and his duties have already been indicated. Otherwise it will be necessary for the board to appoint such an officer. In that event the law should declare him independent, confer upon him adequate authority for the performance of executive duties, and charge him with responsibility. But we know of no statutory language capable of making an officer appointed by a board and dependent upon the same board for supplies independent in fact of the personal wishes of the members of that board. And right here is where the troubles rush in to discredit and damage the school system.⁴⁰

Note the strong endorsement of the Cleveland Plan. This was quite natural, of course, because Draper had been superintendent there, but also, remember the Plan had been endorsed by William Mowry in his important article.

So far as the instructional side was concerned, the Committee recommended the appointment by the board of a superintendent and "once appointed he should be independent." He should have full power to select his staff, hire, fire, and promote teachers, and have complete control over the educational program. The question was, of course, how were these arrangements to be brought about as it was certain that some school board mem-

40. IBID., pp. 380 - 381.

bers, at least, would not relinquish their power willingly. The Committee stated that this power could be "secured in the law," and it added that it must be secured in this way "Or it will not be secured at all." Finally the Committee recommended that the superintendent of instruction be "given a long term" and they suggested a term of from five to ten years.

The Committee concluded its report by listing six principles which, it believed, should be the basis for the organization of city schools. It is significant, I think, that the very first recommendation concerned politics in education--it provides additional evidence that this was or was seen as the most pressing problem. The recommendations were as follows:

First--The affairs of the school should not be mixed up with partisan contests or municipal business.

Second--There should be a sharp distinction between legislative functions and executive duties.

Third--Legislative functions should be clearly fixed by statute and be exercised by a comparatively small board, each member of which is representative of the whole city. This board, within statutory limitations, should determine the policy of the system, levy taxes, and control the expenditures. It should make no appointments. Every act should be by a recorded resolution. It seems preferable that this board be created by appointment rather than election, and that it be constituted of two branches acting against each other.

Fourth--Administration should be separated into two great independent departments, one of which manages the business interests and the other of which supervises the instruction. Each of them should be wholly directed by a single official who is vested with ample authority and charged with full responsibility for sound administration.

Fifth--The chief executive officer on the business side should be charged with the care of all property and with the duty of keeping it in suitable condition; he should provide all necessary furnishings and appliances; he should make all agreements and see that they are properly performed; he should appoint all assistants, janitors, and workmen. In a word, he should do all that the law contemplates and all that the board authorizes concerning the business affairs of the school system, and when anything goes wrong he should

answer for it. He may be appointed by the board, but we think it preferable that he be chosen in the same way the members of the board are chosen, and be given a veto upon the acts of the board.

Sixth--The chief executive officer of the department of instruction should be given a long term and may be appointed by the board. If the board is constituted of two branches, he should be nominated by the business executive and confirmed by the legislative branch. Once appointed, he should be independent. He should appoint all authorized assistants and teachers from an eligible list to be constituted as provided by law. He should assign to duties and discontinue services for cause at his discretion. He should determine all matters relating to instruction. He should be charged with the responsibility of developing a professional and enthusiastic teaching force and of making all the teaching scientific and forceful. He must perfect the organization of his department and make and carry out plans to accomplish this. If he cannot do this in a reasonable time he should be superseded by one who can.⁴¹

Three of the members of the Committee, Draper, Powell, and Poland signed the report. Superintendent Lane of Chicago endorsed the report but disagreed with the idea of having two boards acting against each other (item 3) and with the idea that chief executive business officer have a veto over the board (item 5). Superintendent Seaver also endorsed the report but with one very important reservation: he wanted the superintendent to control the schools but he wanted the ultimate authority to reside in the hands of the school board. This is the way he stated his position:

All power and authority in school affairs should reside ultimately in the board of education, consisting of not more than eight persons appointed by the mayor of the city, to hold office four years, two members retiring annually and eligible for reappointment once and no more. This board should appoint as its chief officer a superintendent of instruction, whose powers and duties should be to a large extent defined by statute law, and not wholly or chiefly by the regulations of

41. IBID., pp. 385 - 386.

the board of education. The superintendent of instruction should have a seat and voice but not a vote in the board of education. The board of education should also appoint a business agent, and define his powers and duties in relation to all matters of buildings, repairs, and supplies, substantially as set forth in the report in relation to the school director.

All teachers should be appointed and annually reappointed or recommended by the superintendent of instruction, until after a sufficient probation they are appointed on a tenure during good behavior and efficiency.

All matters relating to courses of study, text-books, and examinations should be left to the superintendent and his assistants, constituting a body of professional experts who should be regarded as alone competent to deal with such matters, and should be held accountable therefor to the board of education only in a general way, and not in particular details.⁴²

The Committee did not content itself with strong positive recommendations--it also criticized school boards and it did so in very strong language. It did this by raising the question of what alternative there was to accepting its recommendations. The answer was that:

It is not in doubt. All who have had any contact with the subject are familiar with it. It is administration by boards or committees, the members of which are not competent to manage professional matters and develop an expert teaching-force. Yet they assume, and in most cases honestly, the knowledge of the most experienced. They override and degrade a superintendent, when they have the power to do so, until he becomes their mere factotum. For the sake of harmony and the continuance of his position he concedes, surrenders, and acquiesces in their acts, while the continually increasing teaching-force becomes weaker and weaker and the work poorer and poorer. If he refuses to do this, they precipitate an open rupture and turn him out of his position. Then they cloud the issues and shift the responsibility from one to another. There are exceptions, of course, but they do not change the rule.⁴³

On the basis of the evidence presented in the preceding section--evidence from both professional and lay journals, this statement was

42. IBID., pp. 388 - 389.

43. IBID., p. 382 (Italics mine).

certainly justifiable--it described the real world in the schools in 1895. But strategically it was probably a mistake. What it did was to antagonize school board members generally and one in particular. The man was William George Bruce, school board member and founder and editor of the American School Board Journal. He led the fight against the superintendents and he was an able, and a powerful adversary--powerful because he had a journal at his disposal.

William George Bruce was a Milwaukee newspaperman who had been elected to the school board in that city. In 1891 he decided there was a need for a journal to serve school board members, so he founded one. Through this journal he informed board members and superintendents about what was going on around the country on all kinds of educational matters from the latest ventilating systems to new books on teaching methods. And through his editorial page he spoke directly to board members and superintendents, presenting his very definite ideas on how the schools should be run and who should run them.

Most important in this story is the fact that he was both the great advocate and the defender of school boards. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the influence that Bruce exerted either through his journal or his other activities, but it had to be considerable. As owner of the Journal, Bruce was a shrewd promotor and by 1897 he had built the circulation up to 44,000 copies.⁴⁴ Equally important in terms of its influence

44. He featured some solid articles, he inserted much information which had to be extremely valuable to anyone running a school, and he included numerous news items--at times almost gossip items from all over the

was the fact that the Journal was sold to both school board members and superintendents. Bruce also extended influence through the state association of school boards, which he promoted and helped to organize, and he published lengthy reports of the meetings of these organizations in the Journal.⁴⁵ He was also the leader in the movement to create the department of school boards within the National Education Association. This department was established in the summer of 1895, and it met for the first time in 1896. It is significant, I think, that the title of the new organization was not the Department of School Boards but the Department of School Administration. And I think that the drive to establish this Department was not unrelated to the attack on school boards in the Draper Report or to the developments in Cleveland. Bruce makes clear he is responding to criticism in his speech launching the new organization.⁴⁶

Bruce's reaction to the Draper Report was quick and sharp. The Report was given at the end of February, 1895. He responded in March with an editorial entitled "The 'Czar' Movement" in which he accused superintendents of wanting to eliminate school boards. Then in the April edition

country. Finally, and perhaps most important, each issue was filled with photographs of board members and superintendents. Generally a single town such as Webb City, Missouri would be featured. He also printed the latest news regarding the hiring and firing of superintendents, and their salary schedules in many cities.

45. By 1896 four states had organized school board associations. These states were Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Texas.

46. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1896, p. 970.

Bruce devoted a dramatic cartoon along with editorial comments to the Report.⁴⁷ The setting for the cartoon was the Roman Senate and all of the characters are dressed in togas. In the foreground there is a man lying on the ground with blood flowing from his chest. He is labeled Vox Populi. Leaning over this person in a grieving manner is another figure. His label is School Board. In the background, walking away from the scene, are several men with knives in their hands. They are educators and conspicuous among them is Andrew Draper. Also in the background under a statue is the inscription "Schools Belong to the People." The title of the cartoon is "Julius Caesar 'Educationalized.'" Under the cartoon Bruce reported that the Draper Report "proposes that the School Boards in cities be reduced to a bureau of clerks and the Superintendents elevated to supreme power. . .and, in fact, become the 'Czars' over the American public school system."⁴⁸

In the May edition of the Journal Bruce reported, in a column entitled "Educational Tyranny," that he had received "large numbers of letters from all parts of the Country" commenting on his attack on the Draper Report. The majority of them, he said, supported his position opposing the "centralization of power in school affairs." Some of these letters even came from city superintendents themselves and he quoted at length from one such letter. The quotation ended with these words: "They (the educators) desire the Boards of Education to be mere servants, granting

47. The Journal regularly carried one large cartoon in its first pages.

48. The American School Board Journal, Vol. X, No. 4, p. 1.

these Boards only one privelege--that of electing these mighty educators to supreme control for life, with the power to employ teachers and run the educational machine without 'let or hindrance.' The people will be exceedingly unwise to let anything out of their hands that deeply concerns them."⁴⁹ Those words coming from a prominent superintendent must have pleased school board members, and especially their champion William Bruce.

I think it is certain that there would have been opposition on the part of school board members to the Draper Report and to the power move by superintendents. But the opposition certainly would not have been as well organized had it not been for William Bruce. He had a journal and he used it to lead the counter-attack. In the months that followed the main battle, he continued to snipe away at Draper and his associates, accusing them of wanting to eliminate school boards altogether. He charged them with being power-hungry and undemocratic and he warned the country of the dangers involved in centralizing the school system. As part of his strategy he made frequent attacks on the Cleveland school organization, sometimes attacking its "undemocratic" character and sometimes presenting "evidence" to show that it was a dismal failure. In his dramatic cartoons and in his editorials he presented Draper and his colleagues as villains and he probably succeeded in making many superintendents feel very guilty.

For example, in the issue of December, 1895, Bruce devoted another slashing cartoon and critical comments to the Cleveland Plan and to Andrew Draper. The title of the cartoon is "The Modern Feast of Herod"

49. IBID., Vol. X, No. 5, p. 8.

and the scene is a banquet table set in ancient times. There are several men seated about the table eating and drinking. In the center of the scene in front of the table is a man carrying the head of Vox Populi in a bowl. The man serving this head of the people up for the feast is labeled Andrew Draper. Beneath the cartoon is the caption "The Cleveland Plan, or the Sacrifice of Sensible School Board Representation." Under this, Bruce has Draper say, "We need school boards no longer. A monarchical form of school government will do. The superintendent alone must rule. Henceforth behead all school boards." And when one of the guests raises a question about the "good public that must pay," Bruce has Draper interrupt to say, "The public be Vanderbilt! The superintendent can boss the whole job--the school board is nit."⁵⁰

In the same issue of the Journal, Bruce devoted a long editorial to "The Cleveland Plan." After a paragraph in which he described the arrangement, he launched into his criticism:

The idea which led to the Cleveland plan of school administration was conceived at a time when the city had a large and corrupt Board of Education. It was then held by some of the best citizens of Cleveland that a large evil could be reduced to a small one, and that the way to increase the quality and efficiency of the school board was to reduce the number of its membership. That looked so simple and would accomplish so much. Hence, the number was cut down to seven, with a business manager and an educational manager as the two executive heads. The latter were invested with arbitrary powers; one in the management of the practical business affairs of the school system; the other in the professional or educational department.

The promoters of this plan have, since its inauguration, announced to the world from time to time that the ideal system had been found, and in newspaper and magazine articles described its beauties, and in glittering generalities the ideal relations between the professional and business factors of that great

50. IBID., Vol. XI, No. 6, p. 1.

school system were duly enumerated. The world was not to progress farther. Nothing better could be had. The Cleveland plan embodied all. Judge Draper said so. And that settled it. . .

The Cleveland School plan is a sad reflection upon Cleveland citizenship. The more equitably its citizens are represented in its school government the more corruption, it must be assumed, is aggregated.

One member only in a school board for every fifty thousand population is a ridiculous jugglery with the principle of representation and an affront to the sacred rights of citizenship. A centralization of power thus formed cannot result in the greatest good for the greatest number, more specially in public school affairs, with which the average citizen desires to be in closer touch, and in whose management he claims a voice.⁵¹

In his attacks on the Draper Report and in his other frequent statements on the question of the proper role of school boards and superintendents and the proper relationship between the two, Bruce succeeded in muddying the waters and school administrators have been trying to get them cleared up ever since. He agreed that the superintendent "should be recognized as the educational expert" but he was not willing to concede that the board's function was simply to legislate, it was also to "administer."⁵² When it came down to the precise duties board members should have, Bruce, in this period at least, was vague, but it is clear that he intended for them to have educational duties.⁵³ The result was that the

51. IBID., p. 10.

52. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1896, pp. 970-73. To get educators on his side he argued that if board members were educated about school affairs they would be more likely to accept the superintendent as an expert.

53. This comes out clearly in his frequent criticisms of the move toward having small boards instead of large ones. In May of 1896, he commented editorially on the fact that some members of the Chicago school board had resigned because they did not have the time to do the work.

distinction between the "legislative" function and the "executive" function was blurred and apparently, despite decades of effort by school administrators, it remains blurred. William Bruce was, of course, not the only person responsible for this development. But he was the leader. He sent out questionnaires to school board members asking for their views on who should have what power and he printed many of their replies in the Journal. He also encouraged the discussion of the problem in the state school board association meetings. And the resolution of this problem was one of his reasons for bringing the national organization of school boards into existence. In their discussions (which Bruce published) leading board members disagreed and their views ranged (as might have been expected) from those in favor of having the board hire the superintendent and letting him run the schools to those who believed the board should hire teachers, select textbooks, etc. I found none of them, however, who advocated doing away with school boards. Even the most liberal took the position that the board had the final authority which indeed it did and has. As William Mowry said, "Every one knows how reluctant men are to give up authority when once they have secured it, however small or brief it may be."⁵⁴

The battle between superintendents and school boards was also waged

Bruce said that "the labors assigned to every member of the board are exacting and arduous" and because this was so he believed that boards should be large, perhaps as large as forty in the largest cities. Vol.XI, No.4,p.3.

54. Educational Review, 1895, Op. Cit., p. 40, (Italics mine).

in thousands of school districts all over the country. It was here that the actual fighting took place and it was here that there were real casualties. The question about whether the effort to implement the recommendations contained in the Draper Report would not cause some casualties among superintendents had been raised in the discussion period following the presentation of the Report. Draper's response to this question was that it probably would but that a superintendent who was not "strong and decided enough to make the position secure is of small consequence to anybody." He urged superintendents to take up the fight--to overcome the "evil-disposed persons and make for righteousness."⁵⁵ This was late in February, 1895.

In the months that followed, many superintendents took Draper seriously and carried the fight to the enemy and in August of 1895 Bruce gave an account of the battle. Under the title "Deposing Superintendents" he wrote: "We have observed with interest, and in some cases with regret, the fierce contests which have been waged in many school boards this summer over the retention or dismissal of superintendents. So fiercely have some of these contests been waged that the press and the public have been wrought to the highest pitch." He reported that superintendents A. P. Marble of Omaha and P. W. Search of Los Angeles "and others equally prominent" had been fired. He noted that the "decapitation of so high a school official was an unpleasant task wrought with strife and ill-feeling." Then he stated the bald truth about the superintendent's position in American education: "The superintendent's position is a difficult one."

55. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1895, p. 397.

He is the ready target for unreasonable parents, disgruntled teachers and officious school board members. In a vortex of school board quarrels, he is the first to become crushed."⁵⁶

There is abundant evidence that Bruce's description of the job was an accurate one and that the situation has not changed. It will be impossible to get the data to tell the story of how much pain and anguish has been caused to superintendents and their families by these struggles which have occurred repeatedly down through the years. The ultimate tragedy in this connection occurred in Marshalltown, Iowa in 1896. C. P. Rogers had been superintendent there since 1874--twenty-two years--and he had been praised publicly by the editor of the Journal of Education, A. E. Winship, as being one of the best superintendents in the country. Winship had visited the Marshalltown schools and he knew Rogers. He described him as "a most kind and gentle spirit" and as a "progressive educator, devoted even too exclusively to the interests of his schools." But Rogers had antagonized a prominent physician in Marshalltown, who finally succeeded after several failures in getting himself elected to the school board in 1895 and then to the presidency of the board in 1896. In July of 1896 he was featured and praised by Bruce in his journal for his active participation in discovering deficiencies in the schools. In January of 1896 Superintendent Rogers resigned. During the summer of 1896 he was unable to find another job. Early in September he committed suicide.⁵⁷

William Bruce's response to this problem was to urge school board

56. American School Board Journal, Vol. XI, No. 2, p. 8 - 9, (Italics mine)

57. Vol. XLIV, No. 11, September 17, 1896, p. 196.

members to be more magnanimous in carrying out their "sacred trust." They should never, he said, act out of prejudice or revenge or selfishness.⁵⁸ In other words, they should behave like gods not men. Incidentally, the solutions to the problem suggested by the leaders in school administration, especially those safe under tenure in universities, has been equally unrealistic. One of their suggestions was to have superintendents be Lincoln-type characters.⁵⁹

In the years that followed, both educators and board members continued to discuss and debate the questions of the proper function of superintendents and school board members and the other matters, such as the size of school boards, that had been raised by the Draper Committee. As I said, school board members disagreed among themselves on everything but the fact that the school board was the final authority. Educators generally backed the Draper Report and worked to have the superintendent made all-powerful on educational policy within the school. Sometimes they sought to do this by convincing school board members to delegate authority, and at other times they sought to achieve power through law as Draper and Mowry had recommended.

As an example of the school board member who believed that the school board should have important educational responsibilities, I will cite Robert L. Yeager of Kansas City, Missouri. Yeager was a prominent attorney

58. American School Board Journal, Vol. XI, No. 2, 1895, p. 9.

59. Educational Leadership Progress and Possibilities, The Eleventh Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of the N. E. A., (Washington, 1933), p. 159.

who had served as a school board member in Kansas City beginning in 1878, and four years later he was elected president of the board. In 1896, he gave one of the major addresses presented to the new Department of School Administration of the National Educational Association and he was elected to the vice-presidency of the organization.

In his address entitled "School Boards, What and Why?" Yeager gave his views on the ideal school board. He does not mention the Draper Report in his speech. It turned out that he was in agreement with some of the recommendations in that Report and in disagreement with others. He stated that power to control and direct the schools had to be lodged somewhere and he said that as a rule this power and authority was vested in school boards. Having stated this, he did not raise the issue again but devoted the remainder of his speech to his recommendations. Yeager agreed with Bruce that service on school boards was a great honor which in turn involved great responsibility and only the best men should be selected to serve. What kind of men were best? "We need," he said, "live, active, honest, and up-to-date business men--men who are abreast of the times. No old fossils, if you please, or a man with a grievance, or a man with a friend to reward, or an enemy to punish. No! No! We need and must have broad-guaged, liberal-minded, cultured and good business men on our boards, if we advance our schools as they should be."⁶⁰ This idea of having "wide awake" businessmen on boards became very strong in subsequent years as the status of the businessman improved in American society. The idea was strongly supported by school administrators down through the years and is

60. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1896, p. 974.

part of the folklore of education today. It is related, of course, to the American concern to have the schools run as economically as possible.

Yeager recommended that boards be small, "say six members for every two hundred thousand inhabitants, or less, with one member for every additional fifty thousand." He suggested that board members be elected from the city at large and not by wards. He believed that the schools should be completely separate from the rest of city government and completely divorced from the "contaminating influences of politics and sectarianism." The need of the hour, he said, was to have "non-partisan and non-sectarian school boards." Then he gave a graphic picture of the advantages of his business model and the evils of the political board in the following description:

In the manner of transacting business, permit me to draw two pictures. Imagine a large airy room, plainly furnished, with a long table in the center, with chairs for six members and the secretary, with plain, ordinary chairs around the sides of the room. At the table you will see the six partners, viz., members, transacting and disposing of all business in the same manner and in the same tone of voice as partners in private business. No speeches, no loud talking, with an opportunity for every person to be heard that wishes to come before the board. Now as to the other picture: City about the same size, enter with me into the elegant upholstered room with frescoed sides and ceilings, furnished with elegant roller-top desks and leather-backed chairs arranged in a semi-circle for some eighteen or nineteen members, with a throne at one end, upon which the president is seated, with a large lobby seated in opera style, to accommodate some three or four hundred visitors. Everything is dignified and imposing. You almost feel that you are in the senate chamber. Directly you will see Mr. Smith arise with dignity and obtain the eye of the president. You hold your breath, expecting a sensation, but Mr. Smith, who is the member from the Ninty-ninth ward, is simply moving that the janitor of the school in his ward be given a new broom, and then up jumps Mr. Jones to second the motion, and when the motion is put and declared carried; you hear applause from the gallery, for the janitor is there with a lobby from his baliwick and they wish to show that they appreciate the effort. The janitor has the fifteen cent broom, but time enough has

been wasted to buy several dozen brooms. Which board will transact the most business with the least expense? You may think it is overdrawn, but I assure you there is more truth than poetry in this statement.⁶¹

Yeager does not deal directly with the question of who should have what power but it is clear that he expects the board to hire teachers and to purchase books and supplies. He does this by stating that the board should act as a whole in doing all these things. He mentioned the superintendent only in connection with giving advice to his fellow board members as to the kind of man to hire for the job. He did this by stating that intelligence and book learning were not enough; other qualities should be sought.

Is he possessed of good, strong, old fashioned common sense? Has he good business qualifications? Is he a man of self-control and executive ability? Does he appreciate the value of a dollar? Will he, in his oversight and supervision, constantly bear in mind the cost side? Is he strictly temperate and moral? To state it differently, he should be, in addition to his intellectual ability, a man self-poised, strong in executive ability, sparing of speech, a good listener, patient, of positive convictions, economical and practical, and strong on the human nature side. Yea, a many-sided man.⁶²

Yeager was followed to the rostrum by William S. Mack, school board member from Aurora, Illinois. Mack spoke to his audience of school board members on "The Relation of a Board to Its Superintendent" and, using the business analogy urged that the schools be turned over to the educational experts. "The relation of a board of education to its superintendent," he said, "should not differ in theory and in fact from the relation which the board of directors of an incorporated manufacturing or other commer-

61. IBID., p. 978.

62. IBID., p. 976.

cial enterprise sustains to its superintendent." The directors of private corporations, he said, generally knew very little about the technical details of the manufacturing process; they hired an expert to do the job and school board members should do the same in education. He stated his case as follows:

Precisely the same thing may be said of the average board of education as regards actual knowledge of the details of school work--of subject matter and the sequence and adaptation of the same, of the relation and sequence of subjects, of methods of presentation, of proper methods of government and discipline when the interests of many are to be considered, and of many other details which must be taken into account in educating children under existing public school conditions. The members of school boards have perhaps a general conception of what should be accepted for a minimum of result, but as to the best process to follow to get desired results they have necessarily only the most vague and ill-defined notions.

In both cases the directors with now and then an exception, have not had the training or the experience which makes them experts in selecting materials, adapting methods and keeping in operation without waste or misdirection the various contributory agencies. They are not elected for this purpose in either case on account of professional or technical qualifications which they are known, or even supposed to possess. Their duties are general and relate to such matters--financial especially--as concern the smooth, efficient and economical operation of the producing factors.

In order however, that those things may be skillfully and intelligently done, which these boards have neither the time nor the ability to do themselves, and which neither the stockholders in the one case nor the people in the other, expect them to do, they employ an expert known as a superintendent. Such a superintendent, if employed to direct the operations of a manufacturing plant is chosen only after the directors have determined his specific qualifications for managing the details incident to the particular line of production in which they are interested. They take into account his experience, his technical knowledge and his personality, and having once settled these matters to their satisfaction place him in charge of the plant as their responsible executive agent, with implied or officially delegated power to manipulate the essential producing factors--labor, materials and processes, or men, materials, machines and machinery--in his own way, limited only by such restrictions as the board of directors, acting as the responsible financial managers may elect to impose. In all successfully managed manufacturing enterprises, large

and small, it has come to be considered a recognized principle that a competent superintendent must be given freedom, without the risk of interference on the part of the directors, in all matters relating to his particular kind of supervision; that otherwise it would not be fair to hold him responsible for results, to secure which in the surest and most economical way is the very purpose of his appointment.⁶³

Mack then dealt at some length on the unfortunate consequences which occurred in business and industry when this basic principle of hiring experts, giving them freedom, and holding them responsible was violated. Private business had learned this lesson but he believed school boards had not and had not applied the principle in education. He asked, "if a responsible expert is necessary in the one case, should he not be deemed doubly necessary in the other?" Then, while not mentioning Bruce, he spoke to the argument he had been using in opposing the Draper Report:

It may be urged, we know, and it is often urged, that a school board's responsibility to the people makes it unwise to delegate too much power to a superintendent. The objection would doubtless be well taken if it pertained to the business affairs of a school system--but when applied to purely professional matters it would be scarcely worth considering were not too many boards, sincerely or selfishly, influenced by it, arrogating to themselves a knowledge and a power of discrimination which even an expert with years of training and experience would dare to exercise only after due caution and reflection. An individual is deemed wise who knows his own limitations, and a school board is wise that does not assume a direct responsibility which as individuals and as an organized body it is in no way fitted to discharge. A school board's responsibility to the people and its obligations to the children of the people require that it take the judgment of its paid professional executive and advisor on all questions relating to the strictly educational affairs of the school. Otherwise the term superintendent as applied to him becomes a misnomer. His function is reduced to that of a clerk or messenger. His influence as an inspirer and a director of the various school agencies is minimized to mere nothingness. Still more to be deplored, what has promised to become an honorable and a neces-

63. IBID., p. 981. Remember, this was the argument used by William Mowry in his January, 1895 article.

sary profession in the economy of popular education is deprived of its dignity and its influence.⁶⁴

To bolster his case, Mack then cited the testimony by "Dr. Rice" in the Forum "a few years ago" (that I quoted earlier) to the effect that wherever Rice had found good schools he had found a highly competent superintendent (such as L. H. Jones of Indianapolis) who had been given the freedom and the authority to do the job. (So Rice's influence was extended as his opinion was presented and endorsed by a prominent leader in the school board movement to an audience of school board members and educators. It was extended even further when William Bruce published the speeches by Yeager and Mack in the American School Board Journal.)

What was the alternative to applying this analogy and giving the superintendent power? In his response to this question, Mack showed that he had indeed been greatly influenced by Joseph Rice and that he agreed with the Draper Committee:

Wherever a different notion of the board's responsibility to the people and its relation to the superintendent prevails, wherever a different policy governs, there are almost invariably to be found, in a more or less aggravated form, the various evils of which the critics of our public school system justly complain--favoritism and politics determining the appointment of teachers, the retention of poor and mediocre teachers who possess neither sympathy nor professional spirit, lack of adequate appliances, lack of organic unity in plan and purpose, and much more that is inevitable in the absence of a correlating and vivifying principle.⁶⁵

William Mack believed that the superintendent, not the school board, should have the power to select, transfer and dismiss teachers, select

64. IBID., pp. 983 - 984.

65. IBID., p. 984.

textbooks, and in effect make all educational decisions except the financial ones. He believed that the board should have the right and privilege to discuss all of these educational matters but if there was disagreement, when it came to the point of action the judgment "of the superintendent--the expert--should prevail." Mack did not deal with the all-important question of tenure. He stated that the superintendent should be "held strictly accountable by the board and the people for results . . ." The intent is clear: in education as in business the expert had to produce or else.

I don't know whether Joseph Rice was pleased with William Mack's use of the business analogy to argue his case, but he would certainly have been pleased by his concluding remarks:

. . . Our plea is after all a plea for the child. The public school as an institution of the state exists for him and for him only. The child had no voice in its creation, nor has he any voice in its conduct. It is his institution nevertheless. It is held in trust by the state--by its authorized agents for him. This implies that the child in the state has certain rights and that because he is a child he must be guaranteed these rights through the qualified agents of the state as provided by law. These agents are local boards of education. We believe the child is more likely to be assured of his rights as a pupil in the public schools if the management of professional details is left to professional people. Until this is recognized as a principle we do not feel that a board can rightly be said to sustain the proper relation to its superintendent.⁶⁶

This address by William Mack had to be an important event in the struggle by superintendents to gain more control over the schools. Superintendents certainly must have been pleased. Still, Mack had not dealt with the question of making superintendents independent by law as the

66. IBID., pp. 986 - 987.

Draper Committee had recommended. In the years that followed, Mack's ideas did eventually prevail in school districts all over the country. But there was nothing to prevent a school board member from interfering in the strictly educational province any time he wished to do so.

The public discussion of the problem of politics in education and of the problems of the superintendency continued in 1896. In June of that year, at the same time that Yeager and Mack were speaking before the National Education Association, an article written by Superintendent Lewis H. Jones of Cleveland was published in the Atlantic Monthly. Jones ignored the "decapitations" of superintendents which had taken place the previous year and he ignored William Bruce's charges of "Czarism." What he did was make a devastating criticism of school board politicians and then made a strong case for giving the superintendent almost full power. Naturally the Cleveland Plan was held up as a model.

Jones started with the strong criticism of the "unscrupulous politician" in education which I quoted earlier. Then he wrote about the need for attracting and keeping able, well-trained teachers in the public schools. How to do this? Here was his answer:

To secure for any community, then, the best graduates of the colleges and normal schools, and to retain the services of these persons in the most vital parts of the school system, some inducement as yet practically untried must be found. A long stride in this direction will have been made when professionally trained superintendents shall have the power to select teachers, and to assign them to the grades for which, all things considered, they are best adapted.

All promotions to places of responsibility should in like manner be made by the superintendents,--alone if in a small city, together with his assistants if in a city so large as to require assistants. Let the deciding power, in such case, rest with those professionally trained for this work, and teachers will soon come to recognize the justness

of the method. . .⁶⁷

After elaborating on the ways in which giving professional experts (superintendents) power over teachers would improve the situation, he went into an analysis of the relation between school boards and superintendents--what they had been and what they should be:

Members of school boards are usually chosen on account of other reasons than their professional knowledge of school work. They are manifestly not the competent professional authority here advocated. The creation of the office of superintendent is a recognition of the need of an executive officer who is an expert in this very work which the members of the board are unfit, through lack of training, to perform. Having, then, provided an expert executive officer, it is absurd not to allow him to use his expert knowledge in the highest interest of the schools; and yet I venture the assertion that in a very large proportion of counties, towns, and cities the superintendent is a superintendent only in name. In my own judgment, the proper method is to give to the superintendent (either by statute, or by the common consent of the school board as the legal authority and the community as the interested party, preferably the former) full power to appoint, promote, and discharge teachers, and to hold him strictly to account for but one thing,--good schools. Select a capable man for superintendent, give him adequate power, and require results. The possession of power will make him conservative; and the concentration of power in his hands will make it easy to hold him accountable for results. Appoint the superintendent for an indefinite period, but be sure to reserve a means of getting rid of him for incompetence or malfeasance in office. Of course it is plain that since the superintendent is the highest expert in the system, he must be immediately responsible to a non-professional body, the school board or the school committee. This must be frankly admitted as a defect. But it may as well be admitted further that, with our present democratic tendencies, there must somewhere be accountability to the people; and the work of a superintendent is of a kind that can be better explained and better made to appeal to the non-professional mind than the work of the teacher. It is clear to my mind that by this means the effect of non-professional judgment is reduced to its minimum; and while the system will for a while doubtless result in frequent dismissals of superintendents, it will not in all these cases result in the disorganization of the corps of teachers,--certainly not if the same power be immediately

67. Op. Cit., "The Politician and the Schools", p. 811.

conferred upon the new head officer. Indeed, if the superintendent had the power herein advocated, he could soon develop a system of schools which should go far toward preventing his discharge for any except the gravest reasons. In any event, it seems necessary to require the superintendent to be the instrument in securing for teachers a reasonable tenure of office, even though he be occasionally offered up on the altar as a vicarious sufferer for the more fortunate members of the force. The conditions here explained are in practical operation in many places, notably in the two cities of Indianapolis and Cleveland, in one of which the superintendent, by sufferance of the school board and by the glad consent of the people, exercises every function here described, while in the other such power is conferred upon him by statute.⁶⁸

Jones then devotes a couple of pages to reviewing the unfortunate situation which G. Stanley Hall had reported earlier in the Atlantic Monthly. Then he devoted the rest of his article to showing how these conditions had been avoided or corrected in Indianapolis and Cleveland. First he describes the situation in Indianapolis where he had been a teacher for ten years and then superintendent from 1884 to 1894.

Indianapolis and Cleveland have each a system of schools in which the teaching corps is fairly removed from the influence of politics, and professional conditions control, in the main, the tenure of office of the teachers. But the two instances differ widely as to the methods by which this result has been brought about.

The Indianapolis school system was founded and developed by educational experts, with relatively little assistance from the community. Whatever variations in detail have been brought into the work by the successive superintendents, one uniform policy has obtained in this respect. Whatever mistakes have been made have been mistakes incident to educational work, and not in general to outside interference. Whatever excellencies have been wrought out--and they have been many--have been patiently wrought through intelligent and conscientious leadership and a faithful, loyal, and thoroughly trained corps of teachers. The distinguishing feature has been the fact that superintendents, supervisors, and teachers have, in their professional capacity, held the respect and confidence of the community to such an extent as to preclude in the public mind any tolerance

68. IBID., pp. 812 & 813.

of non-professional interference in the tenure of office. . . The foundation for this condition was laid in the very organization of the schools. The man first elected to the superintendency, and charged with the permanent organization of a city school system, made it clear as a cardinal principle of action that he was to be regarded as an educational expert; . . .⁶⁹

The work of this first superintendent was carried on by his successor, said Jones, who not only fought off political influence but he was a much better teacher of teachers. The third Indianapolis superintendent again experienced some attempts at political interference and Jones refers to this and describes how and why the attempts were beaten off:

There was manifested about this time some inclination among members of the board to assume the rights guaranteed them by law of controlling appointments of teachers in their districts, rather than to obey the unwritten law which had generally obtained of affirming the judgment of the superintendent. But the movement was more or less condemned by the general public, and was looked upon with great disfavor by the teachers of the city; always excepting the limited few who preferred to secure and retain their positions and standing by wheedling the members of the school board rather than by rendering acceptable service in their profession. There was more or less feeling of uncertainty during the early part of this administration, but things grew better as time went on; and the six years of his work must be reckoned a period of great general progress in the schools. . . The important principle announced by the founders of the system, that educational matters should be judged and decided by educational experts, though often temporarily overridden, had on the whole been fairly sustained.⁷⁰

Then Jones describes his own experience at Indianapolis in a description which provides one of the most forthright and valuable pieces of evidence concerning the problems of the superintendent of schools that I have seen:

It was at this juncture that I succeeded to the superintendency of the schools in Indianapolis. I was familiar with

69. IBID., pp. 815 & 816.

70. IBID., p. 817.

all the struggles by which they had risen to their enviable position; and I felt that if a further advance was to be made, it must be through a still more pronounced and vigorous policy. Giants in the educational world had preceded me, and if I were to survey the field with accurate view I must stand on their shoulders. I had studied the situation carefully for ten years, from a position I was able to see with a truer vision. I assumed at once all the rights that had been claimed by my predecessors in reference to the educational side of the system, and extended them in some directions. I believed that it was my right as well as my duty, in the new office, to appoint, promote, transfer, or discharge teachers as the case demanded, reporting my action to the board for legal confirmation. I consulted freely with the various committees of the board; but whenever questions as to teachers and courses of study arose, I assumed that members of the board would not think of deciding questions concerning which they could not have the knowledge, but that, as an educational expert and the executive officer of the board, it was part of my official duty to attend to all matters requiring definite professional knowledge. I said but little in public about my plans, but I took occasion to explain my ideals quite in detail to individual members of the board whenever opportunity offered. Some were already in accord with my views; others became so upon explanation; while a few members were anxious to resume the spoils or patronage system to which they had been accustomed in politics. During the first few years of my administration the close of each school year brought with it the inevitable struggle; and many times I was threatened with failure of reelection unless I would become subservient to individual members in the matter of appointments, assignments, promotions, and discharge of teachers. My invariable reply was that while I was allowed to continue in office my authority must be commensurate with my responsibility. I think it was chiefly a wholesome fear of public opinion that made these politicians yield rather than press the matter to an open rupture.⁷¹

This courageous policy regarding his authority enabled him to work directly with his teachers, and the result he claimed was a condition of high morale and effective teaching--a situation which Joseph Rice verified in his report on the Indianapolis schools. Jones then pressed his case with this forcible statement:

No other principle ever striven for in the schools of Indianapolis did so much good as that one did, namely, the principle of prac-

71. IBID., pp. 817 - 818.

tically removing the entire control of the teaching force from the hands of the members of the school board, and placing the tenure of the teachers upon a professional merit basis. All other reforms ever made there were small as compared with this one, since this was at the base of all the others.⁷²

Jones finished his account of the developments in Indianapolis by stating that what had been achieved had been achieved largely through tremendous effort on the part of the professional staff--the public had been passive if not apathetic. Furthermore, he pointed out that what had been done in keeping politicians out of the schools had depended entirely on the skill and courage of the superintendent and his staff and could be undone all too easily. So he urged the people of Indianapolis to seek legislation which would put the protection of the law behind the professional staff.⁷³

Then he turned to Cleveland where he said the people had been alive to the interests of public education. Cleveland, in the early years, he said, had been settled by New Englanders who believed in education and a bright beginning had been made. However, as time went on "politicians" sought and acquired places on the school board and began to undermine the schools through political appointments to the teaching staff. Finally, the people of Cleveland roused themselves and led by a few leaders from both parties "secured from the State radical legislation, overthrowing entirely the political influences which had prostituted the public schools to partisan ends."⁷⁴ The result was the passage of the Reorganization Act

72. IBID., p. 818.

73. IBID., p. 819.

74. IBID., p. 820.

of 1892 which he said was "the most advanced school legislation now upon the statute books of any city or state in this country."⁷⁵ He described the arrangement and its operation as follows:

Its central principle is that of fixing definitely the responsibility for good schools upon certain officials, and guaranteeing to them authority commensurate with their responsibilities. Almost equally fundamental is the idea that the educational work shall be done by professionally trained persons, members of the school board having no direct function or part in the appointment, promotion, or discharge of teachers.

The Act itself is very brief. It provides for a school council at large, each for a term of two years. The functions of this body are purely legislative; such as fixing salaries of teachers, determining upon location of schoolhouses, purchasing grounds, adopting textbooks. The law provides further for an executive officer known as the school director, upon whom is placed the responsibility of conducting the executive phases of the business side of the school work. He and the school council constitute the board of education. He appoints the necessary employees in his department, builds the schoolhouses, directs janitors in the care of buildings, supplies fuel and necessary appliances and apparatus, and acts generally as business agent of the board of education. The law also invests him with the power, and imposes upon him the duty, to appoint a superintendent of instruction, should a vacancy occur in that office; and he holds by statute the right to remove such officer, 'for sufficient cause,' at any time. But it is in its provisions with reference to the powers and duties of the superintendent of instruction that the law is most radical and progressive. This officer is clothed by statute with the power to appoint, assign, promote, transfer, or discharge teachers without interference in any particular from either the director or school council, except that he must receive direction from the latter as to the number of teachers he may employ and the compensation which may be paid them. The superintendent is held directly responsible for good schools, and for this reason he has complete control of the teaching force. It is an instance of vast responsibility and adequate authority. While superintendent of the Indianapolis schools I exercised practically every function which I now perform in the Cleveland schools, but there it was by sufferance of the school board, while here it is by sanction of the law.⁷⁶

75. IBID.

76. IBID., p. 820.

The Plan had been in operation four years and Jones claimed that the system had proved itself. The first superintendent (Jones does not mention Andrew Draper's name) selected a competent core of supervisors who worked closely with the teachers, promotion was based on merit and the result, he said, was:

. . . a great increase in the general efficiency of the teaching force, a development of a professional tendency and spirit among the teachers, an increased interest in professional study, and a marked general improvement in the morale of the entire body. The fierce competition for promotion has been reduced to honorable effort for deserved recognition. Applicants for positions in the corps present to the superintendent evidences of their professional fitness, and rarely urge unworthy reasons. There have not been wanting teachers who have been greatly dissatisfied with the rulings of the superintendent's department, but the number has been small relatively.⁷⁷

However, despite the Reorganization Act and despite the successful operation, Jones indicated that the efforts of politicians had not been completely eliminated. He indicated this but he was optimistic about Cleveland (his optimism was not warranted as we shall see) as this passage from the article indicates.

But the politician feels really neglected. Like Othello, his occupation is gone. Like Othello, further, he contemplates murder. However, the people are wide-awake, and will not allow the schools to pass back into the hands of the partisan politician. In the election which was recently held, the people elected to a third term as school director the man who has so wisely and creditably administered that office since the law was enacted. His campaign, both in the nomination by his own party and in the general election, was based squarely upon the theory of efficiency in the office as the test, without reference to political relations and methods. Other good men made the canvass for the nomination, but they could plead only that, since it was a political office, it was time to pass it around. The people did not think so. They elected the present director by a majority six times as great as that by which he was first

77. IBID., p. 821.

elected to the same office. Notice has thus been given that the public schools of Cleveland are not in the future to be considered as subject to the damning influences of partisan politics. It is a great achievement in the interests of public education when so practical a step has been taken in a matter of such vital interest to the public schools.⁷⁸

I will return to the Cleveland story in the next section of this report. Here I want to present the evidence which indicates that changes were taking place (although the change was sometimes erratic) in American education, and that these changes were generally in the direction of eliminating the worst features of political interference in the schools, and in the direction of giving superintendents more power. In this development, schoolmen did their part through writing, e.g., the Jones and Hall articles in the Atlantic Monthly, but they were aided too by the city reform movement which featured the progressive movement especially after 1900.

I should include additional evidence of the part educators played in bringing about change. In 1898, the Atlantic Monthly featured another article by schoolmen. This one followed the pattern of one of the earlier articles and was entitled "Confessions of Three School Superintendents." I used some of the material from this article earlier in showing the extent of political interference in the public schools. The first two superintendents who wrote devoted most of their attention to reporting a sad tale of political influence in the selection and promotion of teachers, and in the selection of textbooks, and also of the great vulnerability of superintendents. In this connection the first superintendent stated flatly that "the superintendent is less secure in his position than the

78. IBID., p. 821.

humblest teacher."⁷⁹

The third superintendent who identified himself as having served in two large cities also reported that conditions on school boards were pretty bad. He described the situation in the first city in which he served as follows:

In this city the board consisted of fifty-two members,--four from each of thirteen wards. Since I left it, enough wards have been created to make the membership of the board sixty-four. The members were nominated and elected by wards, each ward voting only for its own representatives. The meetings of the board suggested meetings of the state legislature, and there were the caucusing, the 'log-rolling,' and the partisanship of a political convention whenever questions of importance came up. There was a sprinkling of intelligent men, enough to constitute an efficient board; the rest of the members were men who could not speak grammatically, and some of them were known in the community as men of low morals, who were not fit to come in contact either with women teachers or with children in the schools. I remember that one night at eleven o'clock I saw the president of the board leaning against a tree at the curbstone, so intoxicated that a fellow member of the board, who happened to be with him, had to lead him home. This was not an unusual occurrence; he was known as a very dissipated man at the time he was elected president. He had the support of a majority of the members until his conduct in the meetings of the board became a public scandal. The low moral tone of the board was felt throughout the schools. Teachers depended on favoritism and political 'pulls,' instead of on merit, for promotion, and some were kept in their positions who were not only incompetent, but also of objectionable character. The principal of one of the high schools was known to be untruthful, absolutely untrustworthy in money matters, and an unprincipled man generally; yet he had the support of a majority of the board for a number of years.⁸⁰

However, unlike the first two superintendents the third one devoted the last half of his statement to the changes that were needed in city school administration. This statement is both interesting and important. It

79. Vol. 82, p. 646.

80. IBID., p. 650.

is interesting because its six major points correspond closely to the recommendations of the Draper Report. It is important because since it was published in the Atlantic Monthly it reached the lay public and probably the most intelligent part of that public. The excerpts I include provide additional evidence of the conditions in city schools and they indicate what changes the radical group of schoolmen wanted. This part of the article could have been written by Lewis Jones or by Andrew Draper. The changes which were needed and would have to be brought about, he said, through legislation ("a reform cannot be brought about by moral force alone") were in part as follows:

In the first place, the size of school boards must be reduced. The number should rarely exceed one member for every ten thousand of population, except in very small cities. In the large cities the number should be made considerably less than this. Such reduction in numbers will be made possible, however, only by reducing the work now done gratuitously by members, and giving it into the hands of paid expert agents who are to work under the general supervision of the board. At present, members of school boards are obliged to spend a very considerable portion of their time in attending to details which can be managed much more efficiently by paid experts. Business men of unusual ability, and of large business interests of their own to look after, cannot afford to accept positions on a school board under existing conditions. The only way to secure the services of such men is to relieve the boards of official details, and to require of them only the direction of the general policy and work of the schools.

In the second place, all ward representations in school boards should be abolished. Every member should be a 'member at large' and should represent the whole city. When members are elected by wards, the local ward politician dictates the election. . .

There is no one method of selecting a school board that is best for all cities. In some cities the local conditions are such that appointment by the mayor is the best method; in others, like Philadelphia, appointment by the judges of the courts seems to be fairly satisfactory. In the majority of cities, however, election by popular ballot is undoubtedly the best method.

In the third place, there should be an entire separation between the educational part and the business part of the

administration of the public school system in our large cities. There should be an agent for the business department and a superintendent of instruction for the educational department, each of whom should be directly responsible to the board.

In the fourth place, the educational department should be intrusted more largely than it has been to the superintendent of instruction. I fail to see a good reason why there should be a committee of the board called 'Committee on Course of Study.' The making of a course of study is the work of an educational expert. The more intelligent a school committee, the more the members shrink from such a responsibility. Yet in some of our larger cities the superintendent is barely consulted when the course of study is to be revised. I see little occasion, also, for a committee on textbooks. Text-books should be selected by the superintendent after free consultation with the teachers who are to use them.

There must be more concentration of responsibility, and consequently of authority, in the administration of school affairs. There is probably no other public official, of equal ability, intelligence, and character, who has so little real legal authority as a superintendent of schools. The mayor of a city, as a rule, has no more ability, and usually has less education, than the superintendent of schools, and yet he has very much more authority. Likewise the judges of our courts, with a life tenure, have immensely more power than men who are their equals and are engaged in superintending public schools. 'One man power' becomes dangerous only when it is not linked with 'one man responsibility.'

In the fifth place, where the school board is elected directly by the people, and is therefore directly responsible to the people, it ought to be financially independent of the rest of the city government. It ought to have charge not only of the schools and the teachers, but also of the schoolhouses and the janitors. The city council ought to have no authority to determine how much money is to be spent on schools and school buildings. This is the only solution of the embarrassing problem of securing sufficient school room for the school population of our large cities. Cities like New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, and Chicago fail to build schoolhouses fast enough to keep pace with the growth of population, not because they cannot afford it or because the taxpayers are unwilling to be taxed more heavily for such a purpose, but because the politicians in the city government want the money for other purposes.

In the sixth place, I wish there might be an ordinance in every city providing that any person who has been a member of the school board shall be ineligible to any other city office for two or three years after his term of office on the school board expires. In this way, political favors done while on the school board could not at once be returned in some other form, and a position on the school board could not be made so directly as at present a stepping-stone into some 'higher' municipal

office. There are no doubt legal, and in some states possibly constitutional difficulties in the way of enacting such an ordinance, but it would go far toward eliminating ambitious politicians from school boards.⁸¹

Educators continued to write about and to discuss the organization and administration of city schools, and there is no question but that they produced a reaction in the country. In 1900, Andrew Draper wrote the chapter on educational organization and administration in the volume edited by Nicholas Murray Butler and prepared for the Paris Exposition. In it Draper included the recommendation of his 1895 sub-committee of the Committee of Fifteen. Then he testified to the extent to which those recommendations were being adopted. They had made "much headway", he said, and he added, "there is not a city of any importance in the country in which they are not under discussion, and there are few in which some of them have not been adopted and put in operation."⁸²

There is additional evidence that the drive for power which the leaders in educational administration launched in 1890 was paying dividends toward the end of the decade. For one thing, the continuous public discussion led, in part at least, by the Atlantic Monthly had stirred legislators to action. Here is Aaron Gove, well known and highly successful superintendent of the Denver school, speaking before the Department of Superintendence meeting of the National Education Association in Chicago in February of 1900:

Without question the greatest problem today is how best to administer the public-school interests of a city. The same problem in a field but little different confronts the student

81. IBID., pp. 652 & 653.

82. N. M. Butler, Editor, Monograph on Education in the United States, (Washington, D. C., 1900), p. 16.

of municipal-government. . .

The history of the last two years or more leaves no doubt of the interest and even anxiety of the American community as to the direction of public schools. From our great metropolis down thru the secondary cities is found an agitation, an unrest, as to the conduct of this quasi-public corporation. Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis had their 'innings' before their respective legislatures last year, with different results. New York had set the pace the preceding winter, with a result that is believed to be an advance in efficiency. The legislatures at Lansing and at Springfield looked with disfavor upon carefully prepared bills for the schools of their chief cities.⁸³

So the strenuous efforts of men such as Rice and Draper and Jones and White had borne fruit--the problem of city school organization and administration was being discussed and action was being taken. What was the result? What changes were being made? The evidence indicates that schools were being removed from partisan politics and superintendents were gradually being given the power to hire and fire teachers, to control the course of study, and to select textbooks.

Writing in January of 1898, Charles F. Thwing, Harvard graduate and President of Western Reserve University, provides interesting data. In the first place the title of the article is (referring to the superintendency) "A New Profession." In the article, Thwing stressed the importance of the job and devoted much of his attention to the qualities (which turn out to be God-like) that the superintendent of schools needed. But he also reported on the power situation. "The power that is vested in the superintendent" he said, "is very great." To bolster this statement, he reported on the results of a "circular letter" which had been sent to 150 superintendents in Massachusetts. The results indicated that 85

83. "The Trail of the City Superintendent", NEA Proceedings, 1900, p. 219.

percent of those who responded had "practically full power over the course of study and over the methods of teaching." They also indicated that about 75 percent controlled the appointment of teachers. He added that "others whose power is not absolute are yet given great influence. On the whole, no such power is vested in any officer of education as is vested in the superintendent of schools."⁸⁴ Later in the article he stated, "the present drift in American education is away from democratic toward monarchical control. Absolute power is becoming lodged in the superintendent."⁸⁵ Perhaps Thwing was overly influenced by the apparent success of the Cleveland Plan. Remember Western Reserve was and is in Cleveland and in 1898, Lewis Jones seemed to be in complete control of the schools.

Even with this optimistic view (which is, of course, partly a prediction of things to come) of the increasing power of the superintendency, Thwing had to admit that there were problems in public education in 1898:

The superintendent is usually appointed by a board which is elected by the voters of the town or the city. It is at this precise point that we touch a sore spot in our educational system. This board is not usually composed of men specially fitted to deal with educational questions. They are commonly selected on other than educational grounds. Political and partisan reasons often enter strongly into their election. They, in turn, not infrequently feel justified in using their office, not in serving the people, but in serving partisan ends. It is indeed a blessed fortune when a good superintendent is supported by a school board that is so wise as to know that it knows little, and therefore commits all educational questions to him. For superintendents have often told me of the endeavors of school boards to run the schools as they would run a sardine factory: cheap wages for service, a lack of discrimination in the choice of teachers, and a willingness to imperil children's lives to save a charge for plumbing. This weakness in our educational

84. Educational Review, Vol: 15, p. 27.

85. IBID., p. 33.

system, shown in the failure to adjust means to ends, is one of those large conditions with which the superintendent is to deal properly.⁸⁶

This "sore spot" was the system that educators had been complaining about since the time of Horace Mann. Thwing's solution to the problem was not, however, and interestingly enough, to provide the superintendent with legal protection as in Cleveland; rather he suggested that the superintendent manipulate and control the situation through his own diplomacy. "The condition" he said, "calls for a policy aggressive, yet not too aggressive; for diplomacy without duplicity", etc.⁸⁷ This was the alternative to legal power. It assumed or granted that the school board and the community had the real power (which it did and does) but that the superintendent could gain it and hold it by skillful handling of the situation. This was the solution suggested by conservative Aaron Gove (as will be shown shortly) and it has been accepted and advocated by the overwhelming majority of the leaders in school administration ever since.

Additional evidence that superintendents were indeed gaining more power, and that some of the other recommendations of the Draper Committee were being adopted, were presented in a speech to the N.E.A. in 1899, by the "grand old man" of the profession, Emerson E. White.⁸⁸ White had been President of Purdue University (1876-1883) and then superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, Ohio. White stated that "superintendents have

86. IBID., pp. 27 & 28.

87. IBID., p. 28.

88. This is the way White was described by A.E. Winship, editor of the Journal of Education, (Boston) Vol. XLIV, No. 12, September, 1896.

been increasingly regarded as the official advisors of the board and their recommendations have received more and more consideration." But this was not all; in several instances, he said, "another important advance" had been effected "to-wit, the giving to the superintendent of the initiative in the selection and appointment of teachers, the revision of the course of study, the choice of teaching appliances, etc. In several instances this initiative has been conferred by statute, and in two or three large cities the superintendent's authority in some of these executive matters is not limited to the initiative, but is final - the last stage now reached in the evolution of the office of superintendent of schools."⁸⁹ White also reported that the idea of separating the legislative from the executive, and of separating the executive into the business and the pedagogic function with a person in charge of each, were also making progress. He reminded his audience that he had actually recommended these steps, plus the notion of having the superintendent of instruction vested by law with the appointment and assignment of teachers, to the National Council of the N.E.A. in 1890. His position, he said, was criticized at the time as "too radical" but he added, "the principle has since been embodied in the school laws of several cities."⁹⁰

I have two other important pieces of evidence which throw light on the extent of change in educational administration. The first is more specific and it is contained in an article in the Educational Review in September of 1901. The author, John T. Prince, was a well-known New England

89. N.E.A. Proceedings, p. 316.

90. IBID., p. 317.

educator who had been educated at Harvard and (for his graduate work) at the University of Leipsic. The article itself was a brief history on the "evolution" of school supervision in Massachusetts. The story was a familiar one--the government and management (with some variations) of public schools by lay committees. But John Prince was optimistic about the present and the future. There were, he said, some "vestiges remaining in modern practice of these archaic remains" but more and more the schools were being run by professional experts. To bolster his case Prince produced in tabular form the results of a questionnaire which had been sent to superintendents in two hundred and thirty-three cities and towns in Massachusetts.⁹¹ I have reproduced the table with its results on the following page. Prince was enthusiastic about the results pointing to the large amount of control superintendents exercised over the course of study and the promotion of pupils. He could have pointed to the negative side where only twenty-one of these men had full control over the appointment of teachers and only fifteen had full power to dismiss teachers. Prince was optimistic about the future, too. Massachusetts, at least, would be marching onward and upward. Intelligence and reason would prevail. In his prediction of things to come, it will be clear that he is taking a middle stance between Aaron Gove and William Bruce on the one side, and Andrew Draper, Lewis H. Jones, and Emerson White on the other. In the passage which I include it will be noted that the superintendent will take the initiative in the selection of teachers and the choice of teachers--the two hottest issues, so far as patronage was concerned. But note,

91. "The Evolution of School Supervision",

Vol. XXII, p. 155.

TABLE SHOWING THE DUTIES PERFORMED BY SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS IN TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE CITIES AND TOWNS OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND THE DEGREE OF AUTHORITY EXERCISED.

Duties	Number of towns in which certain degrees of authority are exercised by superintendents.				
	None	Advisory	Joint	Full	Unanswered or Uncertain.
1. Selection of text-books	8	85	44	92	4
2. Selection of reference books. . .	9	88	38	93	5
3. Selection of apparatus.	6	81	35	103	8
4. Making of course of studies . . .	3	41	21	164	4
5. Nomination or certification of teachers	19	67	40	95	12
6. Appointment of teachers	45	89	60	21	18
7. Suspension of teachers.	41	104	56	16	16
8. Dismissal of teachers	48	102	61	15	7
9. Inspection and direction of teachers' work	..	3	8	218	4
10. Calling and conducting teachers' meetings.	..	2	2	224	5
11. Promotion of pupils	4	16	19	187	7

too, that Prince's system depends upon each side trusting each other, an arrangement William Mowry and others thought wouldn't work. Here is the essence of John Prince's rosy prediction of things to come:

Following the best practice of the past, we shall expect to find in the supervision of the future a unity of service and at the same time a well-defined line of separation between the duties of the general supervisory board on the one hand and those of the expert supervisory force on the other. The school committee as a board will have general charge of the schools, all matters of detail being left to executive officers who will be held responsible for results to the general board. In all matters relating directly to the work of the schools the superintendent will take the initiative, and in some of these matters he will have full power. He will take the initiative in the selection of teachers and choice of text-books, and he will have full power in the making of courses of study, in the placing of pupils in school, and in the direction of the teachers' work. The school-attendance officers and directors of hygiene will be under his direction, and such other executive officers as have to do directly with the work of the schools.

In cities and large towns there will be a business agent who will attend to all matters of buildings and supplies other than school equipment. In towns where such an agent cannot be exclusively employed, the work will be delegated to such persons as can perform the service most effectively and economically.

When the respective duties of the school committee and its superintendent are determined, and both parties trust each other, there will be no need of any intermediary agencies, of district committees, committees on text-books and supplies, and on nomination of teachers. These meeting-places of jobbery and trades will exist only in memory of the time when the people permitted their schools to become a prey to political ambition and selfish greed. The school board of the future will act as a whole in all matters of business, and as a whole will meet such recommendations of the superintendent, relating to educational questions, as need its action.

In large places some supervisory duties will be delegated to assistant superintendents, principals of schools, and, in rare case, to special teachers. But, in any case, there will be but one superintendent, who alone will be held responsible to the board, and who, therefore, must see to it that all supervisory agencies under him are in full accord with his policy.

As has been intimated, the functions here outlined are confidently regarded as belonging to the school supervision of the future because they are the logical outcome of past and present tendencies. With equal confidence, and for the

same reason, they may be expected to be universally adopted thruout the State by such legislation as will make them compulsory.⁹²

The other major piece of evidence which indicates how far superintendents had progressed is contained in one of the first, and one of the best books on educational administration published in the United States. Its authors were Samuel T. Dutton and David Snedden. Dutton was identified earlier as the superintendent of what was one of the best school systems in the country at Brookline, Massachusetts. At the time this book was published (1908) he was Professor of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia University. Snedden, much younger than Dutton, was a Stanford graduate who took his A.M. (1901) and Ph.D. (1907) from Teachers College, Columbia. He had been a superintendent in California and then an assistant professor on Cubberley's staff at Stanford. So both men qualify as excellent witnesses regarding the situation in educational administration in the United States at the turn of the century. Here is their judgment concerning the power of the superintendent.

. . .It cannot be said that as yet there has been in any large number of towns and cities a clear separation of legislative and executive functions. While this step has been taken in some cities, in the larger number of instances we find boards of education not only legislating but still undertaking through committees or individually to manage much of the business connected with the schools, both educational and material. In other words, we find throughout the country every possible grade of power and opportunity granted to the Superintendent. He is seen as a mere clerk or servant of the board, simply carrying out directions as given by them, or we find him possessing almost autocratic powers and acting quite independently of the board. Between these extremes we can observe every kind of practice imaginable; but the trend is so strongly in favor of giving by statute large powers to the

92. IBID. pp. 157 - 159, (*Italics mine*).

Superintendent in all educational matters that we prefer to consider his functions as related to the more ideal situation which we believe will soon prevail throughout the country.⁹³

So what was the outcome of the fight to control policy in public education? By 1900 the verdict was almost in and the pattern of administration, including the nature and power of the superintendency, which was to prevail in the twentieth century, was set. The evidence is clear. Most of the objectives which the leaders in educational administration had fought for since 1890 had been achieved. With each year that passed, changes were made in the direction of implementing most of the recommendations made by the Draper Committee. Schools were largely removed from partisan politics. School boards were reduced in size. Superintendents were gradually given the power to hire teachers, and select textbooks, and control the educational program generally. But two of the basic recommendations were not put into effect. One was the idea of separating the business and instructional aspects of the superintendency. Superintendent Frank Spaulding of Newton, Mass. led the attack against this separation after 1910 for reasons I have given in my recent book.⁹⁴ The other major recommendation not achieved was that of making the superintendent independent, and this development proved to be a major factor in influencing the nature of the American public school system in the twentieth century.

The fact was that no amount of legal action granting authority to the superintendent or defining his function or the board's could change the

93. The Administration of Public Education in the U.S., p. 230.

94. Education and the Cult of Efficiency, (University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 188 - 196.

basic element in the power structure. So long as the school board retained, as it did, the power of appointment and dismissal of the superintendent, he could not be independent. Furthermore, because board members were elected by citizens in the local districts, the superintendent was not independent of the community. These factors, plus the inadequate financial arrangements we have had which have produced a situation of chronic financial crisis, plus the immense difficulty of educating all the children "to the limit of their abilities" in a mass industrial society, have turned the superintendent's job into what one superintendent, writing anonymously in 1916, described as "the most hazardous job known to insurance actuaries,"⁹⁵ and what a prominent layman, writing in 1955, described as "the most harassing and ulcer producing job in public life."⁹⁶

The failure to achieve "independence" by superintendents was one important outcome of the battle of 1895. The superintendent has gained great powers vis-à-vis the teachers and the children, but he is in a vulnerable position in regard to the school board and the community. The former condition is partly responsible for the present unrest among teachers, and the latter condition has shaped and fashioned the job and the men who have held it. The job has rewarded cautious, conservative individuals who have the ability to manipulate people.⁹⁷ So men with these qualities

95. "Why Superintendents Lose Their Jobs," American School Board Journal, Vol. LII, No. 5, (May, 1916), p. 18.

96. Henry Toy, Jr., in The School Executive, January 1955, p. 98.

97. For an excellent account of how the job had moved in this direction by 1932, see sociologist Willard Waller's classic work, The Sociology of Teaching, Chapter VIII. This book has recently been published in paperback form by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., of New York.

have been "leading" public education.

The other important outcome of the 1895 encounter was the failure by superintendents to get school board members to accept a clear limitation of their role, and especially to keep them from making educational policy decisions which superintendents believed should have been made by educators. William Bruce was the leader in blurring the distinction and he helped to build what Willard Waller has called a "tradition of interference" in school affairs on the part of both board members and ordinary citizens.⁹⁸

Partly because of Bruce, the bold effort by superintendents in 1895 failed. The persons who suffered were the superintendents. When they failed in their struggle with boards of education as they did in 1895, they lost their jobs. Since then, the leaders in administration have spent their energy not in frontal attacks on the system, but rather working within the given framework and spending much time and energy trying to educate and persuade school board members of what their proper role should be. Almost every book published on school administration in the twentieth century has a section on the relationship between school boards and superintendents--what it is and what it should be. In these sections the authors invariably complain about school boards who interfere in the "professional" work of the school and thereby provide evidence that the "tradition of interference" continues.⁹⁹

98. IBID., p. 94.

99. See for example, Ellwood P. Cubberley's Public School Administration (Boston, 1916), pp. 110-111 and 118-121. The following statement from the Eleventh Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence (1933)

The major battle in the struggle for power between superintendents and school board members was fought in 1895. The superintendents made major gains but missed total victory. The result has been that in year after year in the twentieth century they have been making more of the major educational decisions--they have been in command. But it has been an uneasy command. For they hold this power at the sufferance of school boards whom they have had to please, and who at their pleasure may play the role of educator.

Teachers have not been involved in the fight to control policy until very recently. In the early years only an occasional voice was raised in their behalf. Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard had asked the Draper Committee to consider the possibility of giving teachers a voice in running the schools, and he actually appeared at the Cleveland meeting in February 1895, when the Report was submitted, to argue his case. He asked the Committee to arrange the school organization so that teachers

Op. Cit., p. 158, is typical:

"Many difficulties reported grow out of the superintendent's relations with his board of education. The board members frequently seek to usurp the superintendent's function. This tendency is an embarrassing and delicate matter for the superintendent. Subcommittee organization of the board frequently results in officiousness on the part of committee members in meddling in professional matters. Board members sometimes use influence in securing appointment of friends and local people regardless of merit. There is evidence that some members lack an adequate concept of the province of a board member." (Italics mine).

would be consulted systematically on a "definite" and "permanent" basis, and he suggested that this could be done by establishing teacher's councils.¹⁰⁰ Andrew Draper took the floor to reply to Hart. He was, he said, in favor of consulting teachers--all good superintendents were. But he opposed the idea of creating councils of teachers and giving them legal standing because "the result would be a combination among the teachers--politics of the poorest kind--to coerce the superintendent."¹⁰¹ In other words, superintendents were having enough trouble with school boards, why complicate their situation by giving teachers any power?

In 1903 John Dewey provided evidence on the degree of participation of teachers in policy decisions. He wrote:

As to the teacher: If there is a single public school system in the United States where there is official and constitutional provision made for submitting questions of method of discipline in teaching, and the questions of curriculum, textbooks, etc., to the discussion of those actually engaged in the work of teaching, that fact has escaped my notice indeed, the opposite situation is so common that it seems, as a rule, to be absolutely taken for granted as the normal and final condition of affairs. The number of persons to whom any other course has occurred as desirable or even possible--to say nothing of necessary--is apparently very limited.¹⁰²

* 100. NEA Proceedings, (1895), p.393. Some Councils were established and the one in Chicago under Supt. Ella Flagg Young had real power after 1910. However, when William McAndrew became superintendent in the twenties, he fought the Council and reduced its power.

101. IBID., p. 397.

102. This statement was made in an article published in The Elementary School Teacher in December 1903. The article was reprinted in a collection of Dewey's articles in Education Today (New York, 1940), p. 64.

This situation described by Dewey, and especially the lack of any notion of official and constitutional provision, has prevailed with few exceptions down to the present time. Why should this have been so? There have been several reasons. First, the fact is that the great majority of teachers in America have been and are women. The teaching "profession" has been a feminine profession. And partly for biological reasons, and partly because of the male ego, it has been difficult for them to become full-time professionals or to get professional recognition. And women as teachers have suffered along with women as women in being denied the right to vote until 1919. Add to this the fact that most women teachers were young and unmarried and poorly educated. All these factors have combined to produce the image of the teacher, and especially the elementary teacher, as a combination governess and baby sitter. I have selected a few items from the American School Board Journal which I think will indicate something about the status accorded to the teaching profession in the 1890's.

Lima, O. Board of Education has forbidden the teachers to take any part in politics, except to vote.

The Steubenville, O., board will dismiss teachers who do their buying out of the city.

The school directors of Hopewell Township, Pa., have officially declared against scholars making love to teachers during school hours.

Grand Rapids, Mich. The school board has decided that each school teacher, before signing her contract, must swear that she will entertain no matrimonial propositions during the year.

The Blue Mound, Kans., school board has a peck of trouble on its hands. The teacher objects to making the fire and sweeping out any longer and demands a janitor.

A second major factor which has slowed the entrance of teachers into the power struggle has been the nature and operation of its major professional

association, the National Education Association. This organization has done much good work but, despite its great size since 1920, it has not been able to help teachers gain power. That this should be so is not surprising. First the organization has suffered from the factors discussed above--the feminine nature and the low level of education (until recently) of its members. But equally if not more important has been the nature of the organization's leadership. After all, there are many men in teaching and they are in the N.E.A. Unfortunately for teachers, the leaders in the N.E.A., and especially in the permanent bureaucracy, have been former school administrators. In addition, the most influential department of this "teachers" organization has been its Department of Superintendence. Now it is obvious that, while teachers and superintendents have much in common including their interest in education, they also have areas in which their interests conflict. Thus it would have been unrealistic to expect the superintendents to push hard for a powerful teachers' association which would have forced them to negotiate with it over such matters as salary or teaching load. It was, and is, much easier for superintendents and for school boards to be able to deal with teachers as individuals.

By 1915 some teachers who had become frustrated with the N.E.A., bolted the organization and formed the American Federation of Teachers. When the new organization gave signs of healthy growth, the administrative leaders both in the N.E.A. and outside it fought it in two ways. They appealed to the status-consciousness of teachers by representing the A.F. of T. as being "Union" and "Blue-collar." And they launched a drive to bring all teachers into the N.E.A.¹⁰³ William Bruce helped carry on

103. For a detailed account of these actions see Ralph D. Schmidt,

this drive through numerous cartoons and editorials. The strategy worked. The A.F. of T. has remained small and, until recently, relatively ineffective. The N.E.A. quickly (after 1920) grew to mammoth size but continued to be dominated by the administrator group.

There was a third factor responsible for the slow progress of teachers in gaining some voice in determining educational policy. This factor was the conception of school administration which developed and became very strong, especially after 1910. The notion was that there was a parallel between education and industry. The school was seen as a factory or business enterprise which, as in industry, was run by a board of directors. This board in turn hired a managerial expert who hired workers and directed production. Translated into education this meant that the expert was the superintendent hired by the school board. He in turn hired the teachers (workers) who worked on the pupils (the product). The board and the managerial expert in industry did not give workers a voice in policy-making, why should they in education?¹⁰⁴

After 1929, there was a strong reaction against this authoritarian conception in educational administration, and under the leadership of Jesse Newlon it was replaced, at the level of ideology at least, by the concept of "democratic administration." John Dewey stated what this con-

A Study of the Organizational Structure of the N.E.A. 1880-1921. An unpublished doctoral thesis, Washington University in St. Louis, Mo., 1963. See especially Chapter VI.

104. For an analysis of this development see my recent book Education and the Cult of Efficiency, Op. Cit., especially pp. 79 - 94 and 148 - 153.

cept meant in a speech before the Department of Superintendence in 1937. "The democratic principle requires" he said, "that every teacher should have some regular and organic way in which he can, directly or through representatives democratically chosen, participate in the formation of the controlling aims, methods and materials of the school of which he is a part."¹⁰⁵ The next year the great leader in school administration, George Strayer, endorsed the democratic notion in an important statement for the Educational Policies Commission of the N.E.A. But Strayer also stated that on any policy "the final authority must rest with the school board."¹⁰⁶ So by the late thirties teachers had arrived at somewhat the same position superintendents were in after 1895. Practically everyone agreed that they should have more of a voice, but in the final analysis it was up to the school board and to the superintendent as to whether they would or not. Certainly since 1940 teachers have served on more committees than they had previously, but my impression is that what they have in most school districts is the appearance but not the substance of power.

In the 1960's there is abundant evidence that teachers have been becoming more dissatisfied with their traditional position of being ignored, and they have become more militant in their demands for a voice in deter-

105. "Democracy and Educational Administration," reprinted in Education Today, Op. Cit., p. 343.

106. The Structure and Administration of Education in American Democracy, Washington, 1938, pp. 59 & 67, (Italics mine).

mining educational policy.¹⁰⁷ Why should this be so? I think there have been at least two major reasons. First, teachers have changed-- they are now educated persons (many with masters degrees from our finest universities) and they are tired of being treated as children. The second reason has been the influence of Myron Lieberman. With his first book in 1956, and especially with his second in 1962, he helped to bring the unrest among teachers to the level of consciousness.¹⁰⁸ He shattered the illusion that education was a great profession and he pointed out that teachers were probably the weakest occupational group in the country. He told teachers bluntly that if they wanted more professional freedom and more control over educational policy they would have to strengthen their organizations and enter the arena and fight. I think that when one of the leaders of the N.E.A. states publicly that teachers "are in a state of ferment bordering on rebellion" it is clear that the battle is underway.¹⁰⁹

107. I am thinking especially of the actions of the New York City teachers who have won the legal right to bargain with the board and also the actions of the teachers of Utah and Oklahoma.

108. Education as a Profession (Published by Prentice-Hall), and The Future of Public Education (University of Chicago Press).

109. Saturday Review (October 16, 1965), p. 88.

Part C: Vulnerability and the Shaping of the Superintendency

This section of the report should be omitted, but I have some fascinating data which will provide support for some of the generalizations I have made in the last several pages and even though the report is overdue and I am getting calls from Washington to finish it, I decided that since I have the data and have thought my way through it, I should spend the additional time and write it up. I think that by presenting these data I can show that by 1900 the main outlines of the situation regarding the superintendent of schools are clear. By that time the struggle for real power and security had been lost and the basic vulnerability of the job had fully emerged--the job shaped the man and the man shaped the public schools.

First I want to describe the very interesting and I believe most significant events in the Cleveland story.¹ It will be remembered that the administrative arrangements were reformed in Cleveland in 1892. By state law the office of Director was created. This official was elected for a two year term and paid the high salary of \$5,000 per year. He was charged with the business side of education, seeing after school plant, etc., but he also had the extremely important function of appointing a superintendent of instruction who had charge of every major educational function except the selection of textbooks--an interesting exception by the way. He was to hire, fire and promote teachers, and control the course of study. This person, once appointed, could be removed only for just cause. There was a

1. Much of the research for this section of the report was done in collaboration with A.D. Ayrault, Jr. in a graduate seminar at Harvard University in the summer of 1966.

school board of six members elected for two year terms and this group plus the school director made up the school council. The director had a veto power over most of the action of the school board and this veto could only be overridden by a three-fourths majority of the school board. So the school director had great power and responsibility (he worked under bond) and so did the superintendent of instruction, once he was appointed. So far as I know, this arrangement provided the superintendent with the strongest institutional, legal position that had existed before or since in American public education.

The first director was a man named H. Q. Sargent and he was reelected three times and then defeated in 1899. Sargent brought in Andrew Draper as his first superintendent of instruction. Draper has already been introduced--as a prominent lawyer, political figure and educator--a very able man. Draper immediately fired most of the administrative staff and brought in his own supervisors. He also in the course of the first year fired² almost one hundred teachers. Under Draper teachers were appointed on the basis of merit and not political patronage. This action, as would be expected, was not carried out without serious opposition. Just how serious the opposition was and how difficult the situation was in those early years was described by Sargent himself in his final report.

One of the most important objects sought to be accomplished by the reorganization act of 1892 was to remove the management and control of the public schools from political influences. That this object has been attained need not be told to those who have been in any way closely connected with school work during the past eight years. But it is due to those whose knowledge of school affairs has been limited to casual observation or common and unauthenticated reports--it

2. E.M. Avery, A History of Cleveland and Its Environs, (Chicago, 1918), Vol. 1, p. 372.

is especially due to the taxpayers and patrons of the schools-- and I believe it is due to myself that the exact truth should be stated. And there will never be a more opportune time than now to make such statement. During the first year of my incumbency of this office I experienced the full force of attempted political influence and personal and selfish intrigue. The Superintendent of Instruction had a similar experience, as these efforts were applied mainly in attempting to secure the appointments and promotions of teachers. We were both subjected to the most humiliating proposals. We were cajoled with promised support and threatened with loss of position, and in some instances with personal violence. Every artifice and stratagem imaginable was employed by designing and unscrupulous people. And these people were not always from the uneducated and unthinking classes. They represented every condition and every class which are found in a large city; people whose previous experience or whose own personality had taught them to discredit the incorruptibility and integrity of public officials. All efforts of this character, however, were steadily and persistently resisted, were gradually diminished and at the end of the second year the Superintendent of Instruction officially certified that 'improper influence has been completely eliminated from the appointment of teachers'. It is impossible to estimate the importance of such official action or to measure its influence in elevating the standard of the teaching force and in promoting the welfare of the schools.³

Later in his report Sargent listed as the most important accomplishment of his regime the elimination of all political or other "improper influence" from the schools so that the superintendent was "absolutely free" to appoint,⁴ promote, and assign teachers on the basis of merit.

Draper remained in Cleveland for two years and then moved to the presidency of the University of Illinois. Why, I don't know as yet; I hope the answer is contained in Draper's papers which are located at the University of Illinois. It could have been simply a matter of a better

3. Cleveland School Director's Annual Report, 1899, pp. 35 & 36.

4. IBID., p. 37.

job or the pressure of the Cleveland job. Probably it was a combination of both. But we have his own testimony indicating why he accepted the job in the first place:

I came to Cleveland reluctantly and with serious misgivings as to the advisability of my doing so...(There follows a long statement on the principles of public education and a statement of his pedagogical, philosophical and administrative beliefs.)

I have seen that the chief dangers of the public schools were in forgetfulness of these fundamental principles and in their being made subject to political influences and to injudicious management until the position of teacher should be held deserving of social ostracism and the school be thought only good enough for unfortunate children whose parents could not provide a better. I have known that the dangers to the schools were greatest in great cities and that these dangers multiply with the growth of cities....

I came to Cleveland to supervise the re-organization of the public school system of the city, because there had been a very decided expression of public opinion here which seemed to accord with these views, and because the authority seemed to have been given which would enable adequate leadership to put a large school system on higher and safer ground than had ever before been gained in any leading American city.⁵

In addition, Draper also provides evidence of the nature and extent of the patronage in public education and the difficulties of the job in his last Annual Report in 1894:

...no teacher was ever so deficient, so unable to control pupils, so lacking in energy, so incompetent for instruction, so given over to favoritism or prejudice, so disagreeable to associates, so resentful of suggestions, as to prevent any number of people of good standing and of best intentions from exerting their influence to secure a reversal of the action of the superintendent in removing her. The people who do this are not all of the class styled 'politicians.' Others who would resent such a classification, and who have no better cause, are no less urgent and persistent in their importunities. In some cases such efforts are accompanied by incivility, and in a few instances have reached the point of menacing the superintendent. In more than one case the columns of a daily newspaper have been opened to indiscriminate attacks upon the school administration by an irresponsible person who disguised the

5. Cleveland Schools, Annual Report (1893), p. 83.

fact that he had a grievance in the removal of an unworthy teacher.

Reference is made to these matters here only for the purpose of pointing out the large responsibility which the Superintendent of Instruction must carry in Cleveland, and how liable he is to misrepresentation in consequence of it, as well as to suggest the extent to which he is entitled to public and general support in the discharge of an unpleasant but essential public duty.⁶

All the available evidence indicates that those first two years were tough years for both Sargent and Draper. But Sargent was reelected by a substantial majority in 1894 and it seemed as though the battle had been won--the plan was succeeding.

In 1894 Lewis Jones was brought from Indianapolis, where he had done an outstanding job, into the superintendent's job at Cleveland. His reasons for taking the job were similar to Draper's.

I felt that a crisis had come in the history of education in this country. The law was so radical that many of us had fears that the change was too great to be backed up by public sentiment. . . . Should it prove that after trial teachers should prefer to have their work judged by the old time school board, and would rather trust their interests to the care of the old time board rather than to an educational expert, then I believed a great blow to sound progress would have been struck. If it should turn out that the tremendous concentration of power in the hands of one man should become obnoxious to the general public, no more legislation of its kind could be had even in more moderate form. . . . So I came to Cleveland to accomplish two ends, . . . (1) To administer this radical school law which gave to the Superintendent of Instruction the unheard-of-power to appoint, promote and discharge teachers without interference from any one, in such a spirit of moderation that at the end of a series of years the teachers of the city would say that their interests, and therefore the interests of the schools, had been better conserved than had previously been the case under the old time form of school board; and (2) To see if I could in this way so carry on the schools exercising this autocratic power with sufficient tact and wisdom so that at the end of a series of years the general public would support the administration.⁷

6. IBID., (1894), pp. 36 - 37.

7. IBID., (1902), pp. 35 - 38.

It should be noted that this statement was made in 1902 after (as will be shown) he had gotten into serious difficulty because of what one observer believed was a lack of tact on his part. The statement also shows, I think, the dedication that Jones had to public education and his determination to administer the new system successfully. This latter point is apparent in much of his writing and it came out strongly in his first annual report written in the summer of 1895. He knew there would be pressure brought to bear upon him to appoint teachers on a patronage basis but he was determined to keep this power at all costs as the following passage will indicate:

The Superintendent of Instruction, if he be a thorough student of his profession, if he be a good judge of human nature, if he have a just estimate of all the influences which go into the making of a good school, is by far the safest person in whom to lodge the appointing power. It is true that to invest him with this power is to place upon him an immense responsibility and load him with a vast amount of very anxious and exacting detailed labor. It is not yet well demonstrated whether any one man can bear such a heavy burden and at the same time be the leader that he should be in all other directions of educational effort included in the supervision of the schools of a large city.⁸

Despite his very strong legal position and his obvious ability, Jones was in trouble from the beginning of his term of office. He was criticized continuously because it was felt by some persons at least that his program in the schools was too progressive--too many frills and fads and not enough emphasis on the basic practical subjects. And he was accused of being a dictator. Sometimes these two criticisms were joined in an effort to discredit him and the Cleveland Plan.

The major criticism came from within Cleveland itself, but as has

8. IBID., (1895), p. 44.

been shown it came onto the national scene through the efforts of William George Bruce and the pages of the American School Board Journal. I have already described how Bruce attacked the Draper Report and the Cleveland Plan through his cartoons and editorials. This criticism occurred in March of 1895 only a few months after Jones took office. It was certainly read in Cleveland and it certainly didn't help Jones' cause. Bruce attacked the Cleveland arrangement as being undemocratic, unAmerican, and dictatorial. And at times he printed material which tried to show that the arrangement was unsound educationally. For example, this item appeared in the December 1896 edition:

"Something Wrong in Cleveland"

Editor School Board Journal: I would like to submit a sample of the education turned out in the lower grades of the public schools in our city. This was taken from a test submitted to pupils doing first year work in our high schools.

Question: 'Where is the Baltic Sea?' Six different scholars were called upon before answered correctly.

Question: 'Where is Spain?' Five were called upon before answered.

Question: 'Where is France?' The fourth scholar answered after the second attempt.

Question: 'Where is Rome?' The third pupil called upon answered correctly (no doubt she was a Catholic).

The teacher then pointed to India on the map, and inquired: 'What is the name of this country.' Three tried their hand at answering before they got it correct.

This is only a recitation in one branch of study. The others are deficient in proportion to the one submitted. There is certainly something radically wrong in the lower grades, either the teachers or the system is at fault. There is certainly room for reform,--too much taught which is of no practical benefit. As you are agitating reform, I hope you will keep it up, and may success crown your efforts.

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'A Reformer,' Cleveland, O.

In each of his annual reports Jones was forced to defend his program and he did it vigorously. He was mildly tolerant of the school board or citizens generally who presumed to know more than he, the educational expert, did about education and he conceded the right of these groups to raise questions but he resented any criticism as this passage from his first report shows. It also shows that opposition from the school board started in his first year.

There has been during the year now closing some disposition on the part of the public to call in question the practical character of the methods and results of the public schools. It is the privilege of the people in appropriate ways and through proper channels to inquire into the work of all public servants. The school authorities have no desire to escape responsibility or to detach themselves or their work from the public. It was in this spirit that the Superintendent of Instruction joined heartily with a movement made by the School Council to investigate through a committee something of the course of study and the general methods of work employed by the teachers. In the general interests of the schools the Superintendent overlooked what might otherwise have been deemed an interference with the work of his department.

The results of the appeal made to the public were very satisfactory to the friends of the schools, showing as they did a high appreciation of the excellence of the schools and a confidence in the present school authorities. The recommendations mostly pointed in directions in which we were already doubling our energies. But among all the wise and helpful suggestions were many of a different character. Many of the statements showed their authors to be unacquainted with the principles of free public education. There was an entire failure in many instances to appreciate the gravity of the interests at stake, and the difficulty of solving properly the intricate questions of methods and courses of study. The ordinary citizen does not easily understand that the science of education is quite as difficult of comprehension as are the subject matters of the learned professions of Law, Medicine and Theology. One who would not for a moment consider that his training had fitted him to announce the principles of jurisprudence or the best methods of diagnosing and curing disease, yet unhesitatingly pronounces upon courses of study, methods and results of education, as if an untrained thinker were able to grasp these finer interests of the spiritual life. It is to be hoped that in the interests of true education the people will soon come to under-

stand that teaching is a profession requiring in those who adopt it as a life work, the highest natural endowments and the greatest wealth of culture. When the public concludes to require these capabilities of its teachers, and then leaves to them the technical details of their profession, the children will receive a more fitting education and the State will be more completely reimbursed for its expenditures.¹⁰

This statement might have been true but it was certain to antagonize people and to create hostility to Jones and his program.

In June of 1898 Jones and his staff made a major blunder which triggered a series of events which was to culminate in his resignation in 1902. An account of some of the details of the story are provided by Elroy M. Avery in his history of Cleveland (1918). Avery was educated at the University of Michigan, majoring in science, and he had taught in the Cleveland high schools and in the normal school for several years in the 1870's. He had written several books on science including one on physics and one on natural philosophy. Later he would write the history of Cleveland. For some reason, Avery decided to go into politics and he served on the Cleveland City Council in 1891 and 1892--the year that city government was reformed. Then in 1893 he was elected to the Ohio Senate where he served until 1897. So Avery was well educated, he had been an educator, and he was a writer and a successful politician. I have some evidence that Avery was hostile to Jones, or at least to the system in Cleveland as early as June 1896. At that time the American School Board Journal carried the following news item with comment: "State Senator Avery stated in the Ohio legislature that 1100 teachers in Cleveland were at the mercy of one man who had the power of removal. And yet the Cleveland Plan is lauded as an ideal one."¹¹

10. Op. Cit., pp. 48 & 49.

11. American School Board Journal, Vol. XI, No. 6, p. 9.

This is the way Avery described the events which led to Jones' resignation:

An attempt (in 1899) to exclude from the Normal School (a part of the Cleveland School system) several young ladies who had nearly completed the prescribed course, on the ground that they were not likely to make successful teachers, aroused great public interest. Some of these pupils had been given a few weeks' practice under training teachers and had been unfavorably reported upon by said training teachers, and were therefore dismissed from the school. There was no question as to the scholarship of any of them and, in at least one case, the brief practice had been taken under unfavorable physical conditions. When the present writer, by request of the girl's parents, brought this case to the attention of the superintendent with the request that she be given another two weeks' trial in the training school and with an assurance that, if she failed to secure a favorable report from her training teacher, no further effort would be made in her behalf, Superintendent Jones curtly remarked that the dismissal must be accepted as 'a closed incident.' The caller departed with the remark that sometimes a closed incident was torn open. The cases were carried into court and the court reinstated the pupil in the school. In the next campaign, one of the young ladies spoke in many of the meetings, aroused much sympathy, and contributed largely to the defeat of Mr. Sargent as school director and to the election of his competitor, a gloomy omen for Superintendent Jones. Soon after this, one of the daily newspapers published (September, 1901), a series of six articles on 'Frills and Feathers' in the public schools; these articles did much to intensify the opposition to the superintendent who was held to be largely responsible for the conditions of which complaint was made. The authorship of the 'Frills and Feathers' articles was an open secret, the paper that printed them kept pounding away with argument, ridicule and cartoon, and other papers followed more gently, until in 1902, Mr. Jones accepted the presidency of a Michigan state normal school and left Cleveland. It is only fair to add the statement that Mr. Jones was recognized, even by those who longed for his leaving, as a very able man with a very satisfactory familiarity with up-to-date pedagogical methods, but it was felt that his disposition was unfortunate and that he had not the tact that is necessary in the position that he held.¹²

The new director who succeeded Sargent immediately began to throw his weight around and Jones in his final report (1902) gives this account

12. Avery, Op. Cit., pp. 377 - 378, (Italics mine).

of what happened:

A formal demand was made upon the Superintendent of Instruction that he allow himself to be dominated by the politicians in making appointments, promotions and discharges of teachers. . . . The superintendent replied he would continue to perform his duties under the law. . . . Following this statement and as a result of it came the attempt to remove the superintendent on charges made up for the occasion. The advice of the ablest attorneys was had in the matter by the executive department; but no way was found to remove the Superintendent of Instruction except by a fair trial upon charges after full notice. . . . Subsequent attempts to annoy the Superintendent of Instruction through insinuation of all sorts were unsuccessful.¹³

But were they so unsuccessful? After all Jones did resign and two years later the state revised the Cleveland Plan and returned power to the school board. When that happened the practical men went to work on Jones' cherished progressive program. The first president of the school board under the new code appointed a Commission to study the curriculum of the Cleveland schools and set it to work with the following statement:

About twenty years ago two new factors were introduced into pedagogics: child psychology and manual training. The study of child psychology is a beautiful and important field of research. The conclusions reached by profound scholars and specialists are entitled to the greatest respect. But the fields of fads and fancies, into which the superficial votaries of this branch of learning have led so many teachers and pupils, are entirely foreign to the practical and sensible realm wherein our common schools should dwell. There has been a universal cry raised against many novel innovations. Are our Cleveland grammar and primary schools barnacled with such hindrances to plain and practical education? The mind of a child should not be made the experimental ground of a pedagogical fancy, or a half-baked theory. Especially should the mind of a child, that must, from stress of circumstances, be all too early thrust into the world to earn a living, be kept free from all subsidiary and secondary bickerings. Let us not trifle with the mind of the child, that at fourteen years of age must face a world of competition for a living.

13. Op. Cit., (1901), p. 68 - 80.

...Would it be wise to carefully scrutinize the curricula of our grade and high schools to ascertain whether they have been overloaded with secondary material? ...This commission to look carefully into the curricula of our grade and high schools, and determine whether teacher and pupil are overburdened with subsidiary work.¹⁴

The Commission found that "the non-essential branches have been permitted to encroach and are still permitted to encroach upon time that is needed
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for teaching branches that are essential."

The significance of this ten year history of the Cleveland schools is, I believe, this: here was a situation where the superintendent of instruction had great power backed by law as the Draper Report and many others had recommended. As far as I know the Cleveland arrangement gave the superintendent of schools more protection than that in any other situation. Even with all the storm and a hostile director he was not forced out legally and yet the man was driven from office. The reading comes through in his last report. Jones either could not or would not stand the tension and the constant conflict. Dealing with honest, sincere, and civilized men like Avery was bad enough but the newspapers were not so civilized. Of course Jones made a mistake in acting so arrogantly with Avery--he should have known better. But who does not make mistakes?

As it turned out Cleveland was the loser too. Avery describes what happened after Jones left and after the school board had been restored to power over the superintendent:

14. Report of the Educational Commission of the Cleveland Public Schools, (Cleveland, 1906), pp. 4 - 5.

15. IBID., p. 37.

Since the departure of Mr. Jones in 1902, the changes in the superintendency of the Cleveland public schools have been so frequent and accompanied by so many unpleasant differences and, in some cases, by such bitter feeling, all of which are so recent that not all of the soreness caused thereby has yet disappeared, that it will be well to pass over them with little more than mere mention. Mr. Jones was succeeded by Mr. Edwin F. Moulton who had been assistant superintendent. On the first of January, 1906, came Stratton D. Brooks from Boston; on the fifteenth of March, Mr. Brooks went back to Boston, ostensibly and probably because he was unwilling to endure for more than ten weeks the interference and attempted dictation of school board officials in matters that he felt belonged to him. From March to the middle of May, Mr. Moulton was again in the superintendent's office, and then he gave way for Mr. William H. Elson who had been called from the superintendency of the schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In January, 1912, Mr. Elson retired.

At the urgent request of the school board, Miss Harriet L. Keeler consented to meet the emergency by accepting the superintendency, ad interim; for the rest of the school year she held the fort with marked ability and with general satisfaction and approval. At the beginning of the next school year (September, 1912), Mr. J. M. H. Frederick, who had recently been superintendent of the public schools of one of Cleveland's suburbs, entered upon a five-years' term, probably worse marred by angry dissention than was the term of any of his predecessors. As if in response to the general demand that the Cleveland board of education and its employees should set a better example to the pupils of the schools, a nation-wide search for a man who had the ability and the 'nerve' to command peace and to secure the highest possible degree of efficiency in every educational branch of the public schools was begun and continued until the school authorities were convinced that the right man had been found.¹⁶

The man they got, of course, was Frank Spaulding (in 1917), leader among superintendents and generally regarded as the foremost scientific manager in education, at a salary of \$12,000. Even at that salary Spaulding resigned in 1920.

The basic thesis of this report is that the decade 1890-1900 was a crucial and decisive decade in the history of American public education. Schoolmen, or at least most of their great leaders, made a major effort

16. Op. Cit., pp. 278 - 379.

to take the control of education out of the hands of school boards. The major national effort was through the Draper Report issued in 1895. In the summer of 1895 a number of pitched battles were fought. Superintendents lost those battles and some of the most prominent of them were, in Bruce's terms, "decapitated." When the Cleveland story unfolded it clinched the case--the tradition of interference was already too strong. School administrators, or at least most of them, learned from experience--they learned not to challenge school boards openly and they learned what kind of behavior helped them survive on the job. From time to time they were given instruction in job survival by some of their leaders who had demonstrated that they had learned the art. This instruction was sometimes given through their journals but it was given most effectively, I think, through the annual meetings of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association.

One such instructor was Aaron Gove, superintendent of schools in Denver. Gove was born in New Hampshire in 1839. The family moved to Illinois and the young man began teaching at the age of fifteen, attending a state normal school between terms and graduating in 1861. He served in the Civil War and was wounded and decorated for bravery in action. After the war he served as superintendent of schools at Rutland, Illinois and Normal, Illinois and then in 1874 at the age of thirty-five was appointed superintendent at Denver where he remained until he retired in 1904. In the early 1880's prominent schoolman John D. Philbrick, who served as superintendent at Boston for many years, visited the Denver schools as a representative of the United States Bureau of Education. Philbrick's report was published by the U. S. Commissioner and it gave Gove a nation-

wide reputation for buildings, organization, and efficient administration. He became a leader in the N.E.A. and was President of that organization in 1887-88--a time when the president's office had power. He was described by his colleague James M. Greenwood, for years superintendent of schools in Kansas City, in 1903 as "the best educational financial city superintendent in this country." Greenwood also described Gove as a man who knew human nature and he was, he believed, the "clearest visioned in 17 estimating public opinion" of all the prominent educators he had known. The reader will remember that Gove has appeared a couple of times already in this report in discussions concerning the superintendent and school boards. On these occasions he was on the side of the school board and thought, for example, that it would be a mistake for superintendents to seek to appoint teachers. On these occasions he gave indications that he knew where his bread was buttered and where the power was.

Significantly, in 1900, at the end of one century and the beginning of another he was chosen to speak to the annual meeting of the Department of Superintendence on what in effect was a speech on the past, present, and future of the superintendency. In 1900 Gove was sixty-one. He had been acclaimed for his work at Denver on many occasions and he had kept his job for twenty-six years. By 1900 the number of city superintendencies had grown into the hundreds and, since the meeting was held in centrally located and easily accessible Chicago, the audience must have been large. The title of Gove's speech was "The Trail of the City Superintendent."

17. "Some Educators I Have Known", Educational Review, April, 1903, pp. 405 - 406, (Italics mine).

The speech itself was a rambling poorly-organized effort but his main points were clear and he stressed each one. First he provided evidence of the origin, and the development, and the difficulty of the job. It had started in Providence, Rhode Island in 1839. Gradually the office grew as school committees found the task of administering the schools too great and placed more and more responsibility on the superintendent. Then he gives a nostalgic but sad account of the first sixty years.

The trail of the superintendent, formed by the little paths in New England and Ohio flowing into one, as the brooks join to make the main stream, has become broad and solid, but not straight. Windings, curves, crooked places, right-angles, and numerous turnings back upon itself are seen in looking over the road traveled. The embryo germ thought planted in the heads and hearts of Greene, Philbrick, Wells, Mann, Rickoff, Stephenson, Jones, Hagar, and Newell has led these men thru devious ways, against tremendous obstacles, and over the trail, by the sacrifice of almost infinite trial with vigorous opposition, in contest and in conflict to the end. One and another languished, fell, died, and are buried by the side of the road. Each traveled his own gait, with rations and blanket only, never knowing, altho caring much, where each year's tramping would end.

The deaths of great men in national and political history are commemorated by song, story, and memorial days. Only in secluded family circles, and midst the personal friends, are the works and lives of heroic schoolmasters recorded and remembered.

The trail of the city superintendent has been followed persistently during the sixty years by very few pilgrims; of the hundreds that have struck it most have left it for another prospect. The roll of names is short. Various callings have contributed to the gang on the trail; commercial, mercantile, professional, and industrial vocations each has sent representatives to join the tramping throng. . . .

But the trail has become broad, even if crooked. Its sidelines are becoming more and more evident. The bureau of education, embarrassed by its limited appropriation and its humble official position as an adjunct of the Department of the Interior, has been, thru its reports, one great factor in unifying the differences in the work of city superintendents. The hindrances imposed upon the bureau have been overcome to almost a superhuman extent by the one and, as I believe, the only man competent for this great work. When the work of

Commissioner Harris shall be comprehended in all its fullness, we shall wonder that we lived during his time without a complete realization of the power of this great man.

A second factor, great in another way, has been and is the Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association. The annual three-days' meeting, if, according to its traditions, it can be held to business, not picnicking, will accomplish the unifying of the methods and procedure of city superintendents. The trail is to become less and less crooked, the pilgrims are to tramp more regularly, and the forward movement is to be more even. Looking backward, the halts and windings have been many, and while the intense, over-ardent reformers have for a day threatened an upset, this department has contributed largely to prevent serious overthrows.¹⁸

Near the end of his speech Gove returns to the "trail" theme and assures his audience that while the trail has been narrow and crooked, in 1900 it was "wide" and "is to be fairly straight so that the recruits need have little doubt by day or by night as to where the trail lies."¹⁹

The bulk of his speech is devoted to (1) an analysis of the problem of city school organization and administration and his recommendations for their solutions and (2) to a series of warnings to superintendents about avoiding the primrose path of following "wild-eyed reformers" and advice as to the proper mode of behavior necessary to insure survival. At some points these two main themes are brought together.

Gove indicated that the last years of the century had been extremely active, in fact he described this activity as "unprecedented." Much of the action concerned the question of city organization and administration. "Without question," he said, "the greatest problem today is how best to administer the public-school interests of a city."²⁰ Should boards be

18. N.E.A. Proceedings, pp. 215 & 216.

19. IBID., p. 221.

20. IBID., p. 219.

elected or appointed? Should they be large or small? Should they represent the city at large or wards? Should the board be fiscally dependent (on the municipal government) or fiscally independent? Interestingly he does not raise directly the question of the power of the superintendent vis-a-vis the school board. Earlier in his speech he had taken a stand against placing great power in the hands of the superintendency but later he speaks of the superintendent as the person who was to direct and
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execute the whole operation.

After stressing that administration was the key problem, he described the great activity which had been going on in city and state government and this provides testimony that all the public discussion (e.g. by Hall and Jones in the Atlantic Monthly) had produced action and that the key question was who was to control policy. Gove tells us that in these actions in the legislatures and city councils the bills which were most radical failed. Why? Here was his judgment:

...A prominent and, as before mentioned, objectionable feature of this proposed legislation was the increased and quite unlimited power for the superintendent. This latter was too radical a measure to be readily accepted.²²

He then goes on to praise the law which was passed in Indianapolis in which the basic power was retained by the school board. This bill he said,

...deserves more than passing notice; first, because it was conceived and prepared by eminent and experienced schoolmen; second, because, led in a way not to arouse opposition by a united body of schoolmaster and superintendent promoters, the

21. IBID., p. 221.

22. IBID., p. 220.

legislature passed and the governor signed the most remarkable school bill yet recorded. So quietly has this been done, and so promptly and quietly has the new regime been initiated, that little public notice outside Indiana seems to have been given to it. At present it promises far better school administration than has yet obtained in the country, and yet, as 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating,' we must wait and see. It is certain that Indianapolis has improved on Cleveland, the pioneer in special school laws for cities. After some study and review of the three bills for Detroit, for Chicago, and for Indianapolis, one is compelled to believe that the bill for Indianapolis is the best, and the outcome, so far, is a verification of that belief.²³

All this activity, he said, was evidence of the concern and determination of the people to place the control and government of schools beyond the reach of "the baneful practices of the municipal governments of America."²⁴ Then he testified again about the effort by superintendents to gain control and again provided evidence that they had failed and offered his explanation for the failure.

Earnest men, enthusiastic to right a wrong, usually go too far and ask too much. One feature usually presented--absolute government by one man--must be a mistake when carried to its ultimate extent. It is unlikely that any one man is competent to direct, control, and be the complete manager of a city school system. However great his ability, accurate his judgment, quick his apprehension, long his experience, and extensive his general scholarship, he is still one, and only one; the wisdom of the one needs to be supplemented by the counsel of others.²⁵

It will be noted in this statement that Gove uses the argument that no one man is wise enough to run a school system. In an earlier part of the speech he predicted the failure of the concentration of power because the people of the country would not tolerate it. He begins this

23. IBID., p. 220.

24. IBID.

25. IBID.

section with a comment about the unprecedented activity (especially involving experiments) in the late 1890's. Then he provides evidence again of the struggle between superintendents and school boards and evidence of his own conservative position--conservative in more ways than one:

One of the most pronounced of these experimental movements is the attempt to construct laws that relieve people and boards of education of not only execution of school laws, but of framing them. In haste to eliminate evils attending school supervision consequent upon interference from incompetent councils, measures are urged placing much power in the office of the superintendent, with few limitations.

In reaching for the desirable, as is the custom of Americans, we are overreaching. It is not likely that any American community will for a long time submit to the administration of any public office with limitations such as are repugnant to their antecedents and training. The personal-liberty idea and the government-by-the-people idea are a part of the unwritten as well as the written constitution of Americana. Even the government by the whole people has never been found expedient and has never been the practice, fortunately for our country the minority of the people have ever, and for safety must ever, govern. A minority of the 75,000,000 make and enforce the laws for the majority.

It is unnecessary to decide whether or not the schools of a city can be most successfully conducted by one man or by a group of men; the former method is impossible, and must continue to be until the sentiments of the people become less democratic.²⁶

Then Gove makes a remarkable statement indicating that he at least was willing to accept a weak conception (weak at least from a legal point of view) of the superintendency.

There is no authority for us. Each man is bound to trek upon his own domain. The reports of the bureau do not assume to be authoritative, but to give information only. Hall, Parker, Butler, Soldan, Maxwell, Sabin, and the rest, however much they may deserve it, wear no judicial ermine.²⁷

26. IBID., p. 218.

27. IBID., pp. 218 - 219.

Later on in the speech he deals with the argument, which, as has been shown, was used frequently by laymen and educators, that schools should follow the business-industrial model of turning the operation of the enterprise over to an expert and then having the board and/or the stockholders keep hands off. He took the position that the business-industrial analogy was not applicable in education and in explaining his reasons he provides evidence for the vulnerability thesis and indicates what this vulnerability meant, so far as the qualities necessary for survival in the job of the superintendency were concerned:

...it must be conceded that a material difference lies between the practical administration of the affairs of a public and of a private corporation. In the case of the latter, often immense financial considerations, the manipulation of vast machinery, the necessity of effective and prompt action--sometimes approaching the heroic, as in great labor strikes--demand eminent organizing and executive power, while the accountability of the superintendent, as well as his responsibility, is always to a small, intelligent, and interested directory; one constituted only for the single object of financial gain, totally free from political or social issues. Interference by individual stockholders is not tolerated. The efficiency of the administration depends upon the superintendent himself, under such limitations as his board prescribes. Prompt action is always, not only possible, but obligatory. His forces are all concentrated upon the matter in hand; episodes, side issues, the press, the public, and the owners are impotent to dissipate his powers or hamper his plans.

But the school superintendent who, with competent counsel added to his own expert ability, constructs a course of study, condemns the work of a poor teacher, objects to the engagement of inferior talent, frowns upon the purchase of unnecessary apparatus, or, what is even more threatening, recommends the substitution of a better text-book for a poor one, understands full well that, however unanimous may be the support of his board, many taxpayers, as well as mercantile and commercial interests, are sure to take a hand either to forward or prevent the execution of whatever plans he may devise. The inevitable letter to the press, over the anonymous signature of 'Taxpayer,' is a reminder that the people propose to allow their representatives on the school board to act their will only when it coincides with that of the individual opinion--a condition, of course, over which the superintendent of private corporations has never to worry.

And so one has a right to assume that, in addition to the power and skill of the superintendent of great industries, the superintendent of schools needs another qualification--that of mollifying and educating a great and not always prudent or well-informed constituency?²⁸

Earlier in his speech in discussing the reasons why so many superintendents had left the trail he stated that "neither scholarship nor executive ability alone has been found ample for permanent occupation."²⁹ What else was necessary? The ability to mollify and education the public. Greenwood had described Gove as "the clearest visioned in estimating public opinion." So the most successful superintendent of the time was passing on to his colleagues and to the newcomers to the field the information on how to succeed in the superintendency in American public education. Gove saw clearly and accepted as inevitable the superintendent's vulnerable position and he saw that a successful superintendent would have to be a public relations man. In retrospect there is no doubt that he saw the real world of power clearly especially in view of what had happened to aggressive, power-seeking superintendents in the summer of 1895, and in view of what was happening to Lewis Jones in Cleveland in 1899. Jones' patron, H. W. Sargent, had lost his bid for reelection and a new director hostile to Jones was in power. The battles in Cleveland in 1899 were in the newspapers. Gove was doubtless familiar with the situation and he could see the handwriting on the wall.

There was one other aspect of Gove's speech which should be presented because of its significance in indicating another facet of the development of the superintendency in public education. At least five times during

28. IBID., pp. 220 - 221, (Italics mine).

29. IBID., p. 215.

his speech Gove warns superintendents to avoid the dangerous advice of "over-ardent reformers", "innovators" and "theorists" of various kinds. In the several excerpts quoted below he comes through much like his successful counterpart in the success-story literature of the day--conservative and practical:

A large part (of the work of innovators), as you and I know, has been discarded as the vagaries of over-zealous but misguided and imprudent but persistent innovators. These people are good to have about us, and may be encouraged to spend their energies like the inventor in material things who seeks for perpetual motion.³⁰

We listen to the theories of the doctors, and are compelled to discard very many of them as impracticable or extravagant. The superintendent who accepts too soon the results of an experiment trifles with the children's greatest interests and wrongs the people whom he serves.³¹

Because professors of pedagogy are made in a year, out of all sorts of material, by some institutions, and turned loose to prey upon us and preach inchoate doctrines, is no cause for anxiety. If some of them do become earnest over adolescence, and the bacteria found under pupils' fingernails, and the curves of the lines of fatigue, and danger from common drinking-cups, and common property in pencils and books, they are sure either to learn as they follow the trail, or, what sometimes is better, fall out.³²

Then Gove ends his speech with these words of encouragement and advice:

The trail of the city superintendent of schools has been narrow and crooked. Today it is wide, and is to be fairly straight, so that the recruits need have little doubt by day or by night as to where the trail lies.

30. IBID., p. 218.

31. IBID., p. 219.

32. IBID.

The throng on the trail will stay there, and wild-eyed reformers with their, to them original, discoveries, altho resurrected from the last century, will fail to decoy the prudent superintendent. Sticking to what one knows, avoiding experiment and the chasing of brightly colored will o'wisps will make those who stick to the trail carry themselves well to the end, and the monument shall be erected in sight of all who pass thereafter.³³

It is interesting to note that Gove warns superintendents to avoid the two mistakes that Lewis Jones made at Cleveland which eventually resulted in his dismissal. One was exercising too much power and the other was to try to innovate and change the program of the schools. But even Gove conceded this latter point would be a delicate matter because while a superintendent could get into trouble by introducing "frills and fads", he could also get into trouble by not being "up to date" or "modern."

Later at the same meeting in which Gove spoke, another interesting and significant session was conducted. The paper presented was entitled "The Superintendent as an Organizer and an Executive" and read by Robert E. Denfeld, who was superintendent of schools in Duluth. Denfeld made a strong speech on the need for the superintendent to run the schools. When he had finished what he admitted might have been an "ideal" and "perhaps overdrawn and imaginary" presentation which he defended, however, as necessary, Superintendent E. H. Mark of Louisville, took the floor to discuss the speech and spoke about the real not the ideal world as follows:

With the organization of school boards the superintendent has nothing to do. These are made by legislation. They are bodies in which all organization originates, and they are, in

33. IBID., pp. 221 - 222.

most cases, the creators of the office of superintendent, and as creators hold control of the office and its duties. Therefore, 'the superintendent as an organizer and an executive' will do just what the school board determines. This is the real, not the ideal condition. As to what he will do there can scarcely be any difference of opinion, but what he will do depends upon the character of the board and his own personality. If the board happens to be composed of good sensible, business-men and not of politicians, the superintendent will very probably, if he is careful and thoughtful, have almost complete control of the appointment of supervisors, principals, and teachers, and he will determine the course of study to be pursued.³⁴

In the next years, as superintendents read about the developments in Cleveland and as they pondered the advice they had received from Superintendents Gove and Mark, they received an encouraging report from, of all places, Chicago. The report was published in November of 1902 in the Educational Review under the title "Two Years Progress in the Chicago Public Schools."³⁵ According to the author, the eyes of the educational world had been upon Chicago for three years. The question was whether the second largest city in the country could straighten out its school system which had been "permeated by political pull and demoralized by diffusion of responsibility."³⁶ The answer was that it could and it did this without any legal changes under a remarkable new superintendent elected in 1900, Edwin G. Cooley. How did he do it? Here is the author's account:

Realizing the futility of attempting to change the system under which the school board was responsible only to the City Hall, Mr. Edwin G. Cooley, the present superintendent who was elected in June, 1900, immediately set about, thru the exercise of that unusual tact and administrative diplomacy which originally suggested him for the place, bringing systematic order out of chaos and co-ordinating the entire system on a plan that recognized but one responsible executive head in the

34. IBID., pp. 294 - 295, (Italics mine).

35. Truman A. DeWeese, "Two Years Progress in the Chicago Public Schools", Op. Cit. Vol. XXIV.

36. IBID., p. 325.

educational affairs of the schools and yet contemplated the assent of the board to every recommendation for appointment. It is not known whether Superintendent Cooley favors a large board or a small board of trustees, an elective or an appointive board. Seeing the failure of a rather formidable civic organization to impress the legislature with the necessity for changing the plan of administration, he did not stop to discuss this phase of the school question, but entered quickly and energetically upon the task of persuading the board to recognize the inefficiency of the old system and the necessity for relieving the superintendent of embarrassment in the selection and appointment of teachers thru the personal solicitation and influence of board members and politicians.

Strange to say, the new superintendent found the board more hospitable toward his ideas than he had reason to expect. Instead of twenty-one rebellious trustees, insistent upon the privileges which they had apparently acquired thru years of administration in which politics was allowed to dominate in school affairs, he found a board quite receptive and responsive, ready to acquiesce in every measure he advanced for the betterment of the school system.

How much of this disposition to yield to the recommendations of the superintendent was due to the pressure of the press and public sentiment, is not for me to decide. Suffice it to say the superintendent did not encounter as much opposition as he had been led to fear thru the experiences of his predecessors. Being an old schoolmaster as well as an administrative strategist, he had no rainbow theories about school boards. He knew that a board of twenty-one members, appointed by a mayor largely to accommodate certain geographical, racial, and political considerations, could have no great veneration for educational theories, nor could it be expected to regard the superintendent as an infallible autocrat in school affairs. A board deriving its powers from the City Hall is naturally jealous of its prerogatives and its importance. It would not sit supinely by while a new superintendent of the vertebrate order quietly arrogated all its powers to himself. Mr. Cooley had no desire to usurp the administrative functions of the board. He was willing to divide responsibility with the board, but he took the sound and tenable position that the initiative in all matters pertaining to the purely educational affairs of the schools should rest with the superintendent. Any other position was fundamentally incompatible with efficient school management.

Like a tactful leader Mr. Cooley, therefore, began his remarkable campaign for reorganization in committee meetings. He took no fight into the open board until it had been won before the committee having the matter in charge. In this way he saved himself endless embarrassment, avoided the humiliations suffered by his predecessors, and deprived the reporters of the Chicago press of much material for imaginative

story-writing. The contests in committee meetings have not been without warm discussion and spirited debate, but having won in committee meeting Mr. Cooley, like a sagacious school manager, made it his business quietly to assure favorable action on the committee's report. By adhering to this policy of personal contact with board members and dealing with them in perfect candor as man to man, Mr. Cooley has managed to enjoy the distinction of having won out on every proposition he had thus far submitted to the board.³⁷

So it took the combination of a skillful, tactful leader, and the "pressure of the press and public sentiment" which had created the necessary environment. Cooley was able in a period of two years to get the board to permit him to appoint and dismiss teachers, to do away with all but four board committees, to reform and extend the normal schools, and to bring about a number of other changes including a five year contract (to replace his one year contract) for himself. It showed that apparently Gove and Mark (but especially Mark) were right--the system could work under certain circumstances. Interestingly, when Cooley accepted the job, he had said that he was determined to take the job³⁸ "as an educator, and not as a politician." But the author of the article ends his report with these comments on Cooley's actual behavior on the job:

So far as the system of administration now in force in Chicago would permit him he has consistently adhered to that determination. He assumed the position with well-defined purposes and plans for the complete re-organization and co-ordination of the entire school system. But of what use are the most exalted purposes and plans without the ability to carry them out? Mr. Cooley is a practical man. He is not a dreamer of educational dreams. He made up his mind that all antagonism between the board and the executive head of the school system must be removed. The board must be won over to the proposition

37. IBID., p. 326 - 327, (Italics mine).

38. IBID., p. 336.

that it would suffer no loss of prestige or dignity by permitting the superintendent to be the head of the school system, in fact as well as in theory. Mr. Cooley has succeeded in doing this to a far greater extent than it is possible to indicate within the narrow limitations of this article. To say that he may have attained these remarkable results in a little over two years by the practice of some of the arts of the skillful "politician" is merely to say that he sought to meet conditions as they were presented to him, that he chose to deal honorably and diplomatically with men rather than rebuff or repel them, to the end that he might lay foundations for a work that is certain in time to place the Chicago schools in the front rank of the educational forces of this country. 39

Edwin Cooley was apparently proving that men such as Andrew Draper and Lewis Jones and William Mowry, who believed that the superintendent had to have power through law (and state law preferably), had been wrong and that the conservatives such as Aaron Gove and William T. Harris had been right. Cooley was apparently proving that if a man had enough energy and ability and courage and tact he could convince the school board to give him a free hand. For his remarkable achievement at Chicago he received rapid national recognition. He was praised to the skies in the educational journals and a feature article was written on him in 1906 in a popular journal by one of America's leading journalists. In 1904 he was elected president of the Illinois Teachers Association and more important, in that same year he was honored by his fellow superintendents by being elected president of the Department of Superintendency of the National Educational Association. A year later he was elected to the elite National Council of Education and in 1907 he was elected president of the National Education Association. Cooley had, in a few short years, rocketed from being a person who was virtually unknown in 1900 to the leading and most highly publicized superintendent in the country a few

39. IBID., pp. 336 - 337.

years later.

But the "success" verdict was premature. In 1909 Edwin Cooley resigned as superintendent of the Chicago schools. His biographer says that he could not stand the strain. He reports that when Cooley was elected superintendent in 1900 at the age of 43 he was "like a brawny blacksmith," nine years later he was "an old man, his vitality gone."⁴⁰ Lewis Jones at least would have understood. In retrospect it is clear that the handwriting was on the wall from the beginning in Chicago. Even in the early years when he had been so successful he had gotten into bitter battles. This happened once because, for educational and financial reasons, he decided to eliminate the teaching of German from the primary grades. It happened again when for financial reasons he was forced to close many of the kindergartens in the public schools. And this in the years when the school board was solidly behind him! The honeymoon could not last and his troubles with the board increased until they became so bad he resigned.

Were the developments in Cleveland and Chicago typical or atypical? And what was happening in the rest of the country as the years passed in regard to the relationship between school boards and superintendents? And what effect were these developments having on the behavior of the superintendents and of course on the nature of the job? I have two important pieces of evidence which provide partial answers at least to these questions.

The first is provided by Ellwood Cubberley, one time college

40. Thomas Woody, Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement One.

president, superintendent of schools, and finally head of the department and later the school of education at Stanford from 1905 to 1934. He was one of the leaders in American education and especially a leader in school administration in the period from 1910 to 1934. The evidence is contained in his widely used book Public School Administration, published in 1916. In the long section which I cite below, Cubberley provides two important kinds of evidence: he gives expert testimony on the situation as it actually was in 1916 and he also shows what the professional educational administrators thought should be done.

All boards for school control are, in the eyes of the law, continuous bodies. They are bodies corporate, have a seal, hold title to the school property, pass the title to their successors in office, may sell and legally deed property not needed for school purposes, and, in case a majority should at any time and for any cause cease to exist, the functions of the board are merely suspended but do not die.

On the other hand, the board is kaleidoscopic. Both the personnel and the character of the board change rapidly. Often the best men in the community do not find their way to membership on it. Men of limited education and inexperienced in school affairs, and with but little conception as to what constitutes good administration of public education, are constantly elected by the people to membership on the board. On assuming membership, conceiving that they have been elected to manage the schools, they proceed to do so in a manner which accords well with their inexperience and lack of technical knowledge. The older members of the board and the superintendent of schools have to keep constantly in mind the slow education of the newcomer. The longer the term of office and the more gradual the replacement, the less the school administration of a city is disturbed by such changes in the representatives of the people.

Types of school-board members. The city which keeps an able school board continuously in office is indeed fortunate. In most cities such boards alternate with poor boards: in some cities such boards scarcely exist at all. In most cities the board is a combination of diverse elements, and represents, fairly well, the general average of intelligence of the electorate and the average conceptions of the people as to the administration of public education. A city school board composed of a machinist, a retired gentlemen, a grocer, a shoe clerk, a

real-estate agent, a druggist, a lumberyard foreman, a hotel-keeper, an old and busy lawyer, a bookkeeper, a young lawyer without much business, and a banker, might be considered to be a board of the better type.

All of these men are upright and honest citizens, interested in schools and in the education of their children, and more or less successful in their different lines of work. The chief trouble with them is not their honesty or their general intelligence or their willingness to serve, but rather that they know so little about what constitutes good school administration that they are likely to think that, because they have children in the schools, they know all about how the schools should be conducted. Should they think so, as most new members on boards of education do, they are almost certain to attempt what they are not competent to handle, and the result is both disastrous and pathetic.

If, in place of five of the better members of the board described above, we substitute a teamster, a blacksmith, a saloon-keeper, a young politician with little or no visible means of support, and a crank with an educational hobby, as often happens as a result of city elections or appointments by mayors, we get a combination which is likely to do much to destroy the efficiency of a school system by turning it into a city patronage department, and by attempting to perform almost every technical and professional function which a board should leave to experts to perform. The superintendent resigns, the teachers who can get away do so, and the schools slowly deteriorate under such administrative conditions.⁴¹

Cubberley then goes into a long account of how schools were still being managed by numerous standing committees and of how school boards were generally interfering in the running of the schools. He was obviously annoyed by this and wrote at length on this "confusion of function." He repeated what superintendents had been saying for twenty-five years. The board should legislate and set broad policy but it should turn the operation of the schools to the professional expert--the superintendent. Thus Cubberley shows that school boards were slow learners. Significantly, Cubberley does not question the system--as irritated and annoyed as he obviously was at the behavior of school boards, he does not challenge

41. Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, (Boston, 1916), pp. 110 - 111, (Italics mine).

the system.

The other major piece of evidence is provided by sociologist Willard Waller in 1932. These data are excellent first because they are based on extensive observations in the schools and extensive interviews with, and reports from, teachers, administrators and school board members, and second because Waller was a social scientist who described the world as it was. I quote at length because of the excellence of the data. They show, I think, what the failure to seize power in 1895, plus 35 years of conditioning, meant to the superintendency.

In theory, the ultimate authority of the school system is vested in the school board, a group of local citizens elected by the community to oversee the schools. In fact, the most important function of the school board is usually to see to the hiring of a superintendent. Once the superintendent, a specially trained teacher vested with authority over other teachers and titular headship of the schools, has been employed, a sharp struggle usually ensues between him and the outstanding members of the school board over the right actually to determine the policies of the school. The advantage is with the superintendent so far as this issue is concerned, for he is a specialist, and can claim the specialist's right to carry his point over those who have not had equal or equivalent training; . . . It is part of the superintendent's technique so to define the situation as regards himself and the school board as to make an extended and bitter struggle over the control of the school system seem unnecessary and fruitless; he should accept the principle that he should have sufficient authority to deal adequately with all school situations and that he should not be interfered with in the legitimate performance of these functions, and he should take his authority so much for granted that others will be disposed to grant it as legitimate and in the scheme of things. The technique of avoiding major conflicts with a school board is apparently similar to the technique which the teacher uses in avoiding such trials of strength with his students; it consists in settling minor details so swiftly and with such assurance that no question ever arises as to one's competency or right to deal with the greater. This is the question of dominance and subordination, and it is settled in most cases, or it may be settled, without an actual trial of strength by the assurance and completeness of detail in the alternative plans of action presented by the persons involved in the situation.

In this matter, as in many others, there appears to be a great difference in personalities. Some superintendents have their way with their school boards over many years, and no one arises to contest their claims; in fact, authority is genially taken and genially granted. Other superintendents are always in difficulty with the board, and we must conclude that it is a difference in their personal techniques which accounts for this difference of results; this is what we are attempting to analyze. (It may be suggested, too, that the ability to dominate a school board pleasantly is a greater factor in determining personal advancement in this walk of life than the ability to administer a school system of students and teachers.) . . .

Some board members are captious, and some superintendents let relations with the board get out of hand; there is, besides, in many communities a tradition of interference which effectively precludes any school executive from ever obtaining a quite free hand. Superintendents caught in such situations have evolved many interesting devices whereby they get their own way and yet preserve their position with the board relatively undamaged. In discussing some mistake which he was alleged to have made, one young and inexperienced "principal" remarked to his school board, "Why, I thought that would be all right, so I went ahead and did it." A member of the board, anxious to preserve the right of the board to dictate all policies, came out upon him roundly, "We didn't hire you to think. We hired you to be the principal of this school. Hereafter you leave the thinking to us. We'll do all the thinking for you." Thereafter he adopted a policy of making a great show of consulting his board members on all minor matters, and of pushing essential matters so far before consulting the board that only one decision was possible. His position was then something like that of the president, who can involve the country in war, but cannot declare war.

Another policy which has many converts is that of pitting one faction of the board against another. It frequently happens that bitter personal enemies and business rivals are asked to serve together on the school board; it is then possible for an adroit manager to play many tunes upon these personal oppositions and antagonisms. Often enough it is one man who controls the board; the superintendent's problem is then to maintain some sort of hold upon this one man. For this, many hundreds of devices have been evolved by harassed superintendents. These devices cover almost the whole gamut of human possibilities, ranging from identifying one's self with the leading member's church to buying supplies from his store or failing to pay a note. One small-town superintendent invariably selected a leading grocer from among the members of the school board, and partonized him with the intention of maintaining a hold upon him; it was a device which did not, because of the personality of the superintendent, have by any means unfailing success; this man might

have done better, it would seem, to have kept the upper hand of this grocer, as of any other, by the threat of removing patronage, or at least to have kept the grocer from coming to believe that he was cleverer than the superintendent. A less obvious policy was that of a small-town superintendent who kept a hold upon the president of the board, a banker, by refusing to pay a note at the bank. Though the banker hated this teacher, as he had almost from the first, he wanted to keep him in the community, until he had paid his note; since this man was the most influential member of the board, the superintendent retained his position as long as the note was unpaid. A more general sort of policy is that adopted by many executives of showing a great deal of interest in the scholastic and personal welfare of the children of influential members of the community.

It is a difficult thing to succeed a man who has been popular in the community, and this is a fact which often affects the fortunes of individuals who fill prominent positions in the schools, such as the position of superintendent, high-school principal, coach, etc. One's friends do not at once forget him, and often they think to benefit him by making things hard for his successor. A lax superintendent is a hard man to follow, for he has allowed the school machine to disintegrate. He has allowed authority to escape from his hands, and his successor will always have a difficult time in restoring the school system both internally and externally. Added to this is the fact that such lax superintendents have usually made a number of friends in the community who, though perhaps not numerous or powerful or devoted enough to prevent his dismissal, are still ready and able to raise the cry that he has been dismissed unfairly and to work a reprisal for the injustice upon the man employed to take his place. Since this new man comes from the outside, he is usually, of all the persons involved in the situation, the most innocent of wrong. This mechanism is most noticeable within the faculty, and the carryover of old loyalties is one of the most difficult things which the new executive has to face. Sometimes the teachers who still preserve the memory of the former superintendent band themselves together in order to handicap the new executive; such fights are usually carried over into the community at large, and they often become very bitter. . . .

The opposite situation to the above is that of the person succeeding a man who has left many enemies in the community. The enemies of the former superintendent, especially if they are members of the board or otherwise prominent in the community, attach themselves at once to the new superintendent, as if determined to prove that they are not trouble-makers, that it is possible for this new man to get along with them, and that it therefore should have been possible for his predecessor to do so. This type of situation is often found when an executive of some vigor and aggressiveness has just been at the head of the schools. Such a man pushes the program of the school

energetically, he fights for needed supplies, equipment, and salaries, and he insists upon centralization of authority in his own hands. He integrates the school machine at the expense of the independence of some of its parts. But such an energetic man makes enemies. Sooner or later his enemies oust him. His successor finds a well-organized and smoothly functioning school system, and a community ready to receive him cordially. This mechanism comes out particularly in smaller communities where there has been a fight for a new school building. The superintendent, let us say, becomes convinced that there is need of a new building, or for extensive improvements upon the old one. He argues the case strongly. He enters into the fight for the new building. He wins, but in the process he makes many enemies. These enemies oust him from the school system. Then he goes to a new community and repeats the process. It is significant that in teaching and in the ministry certain individuals early acquire a reputation as "builders."

It is a fact that has sometimes been remarked upon that certain communities change the chief executive of their school system very frequently, perhaps every two or three years. (Sometimes other members of the faculty are involved in these changes, and leave for the same reasons, though this is not necessarily true.) This tendency of the community to oust a man when he is just beginning to know his way around in the community has often been inveighed against, but its reasons and its causes have not been analyzed. It seems worth while to point out that this insecurity of the school executive inheres in the nature of his relationship to the community. The relation of the superintendent to the community which he serves is one in which alienation is always implicit, and the alienation begins to work at once when he appears in the community, but it reaches its culminating point two or three years later.

We may say that the superintendent has a typical life history in the community. This typical life history repeats itself again and again in the life of one executive, and in community with different executives. The life history seems to be about as follows: When the new executive takes charge of the school system, he has the support of nearly the entire community (except in such a situation as the one described above, where the outgoing executive has left behind him a considerable and well-organized opposition to the new one). The board is usually with him to a man. This undivided support is his until some incident occurs which brings him into conflict with an individual or an organized group in the community. It is not long before such an incident occurs; the executive metes out some disciplinary measure with which individual parents disagree, or supports a teacher who becomes similarly embroiled (or refuses to support her), or he refuses to cooperate with some group in the community in the program they are promoting, or he launches some school policy which proves to be unpopular with students or teachers. The essential weakness of his

position is that it gives him an opportunity to make many more enemies than friends. Opportunities for becoming unpopular, to the point, almost, of infamy, are numerous, but opportunities for gaining friends are few.

The life of a superintendent is from spring to spring. At the end of his first year the superintendent has made some enemies, but the majority of the community, let us say, is still satisfied with the manner in which he is conducting the school. He has made some bitter enemies, as, apparently, he unavoidable must. Those enemies are criticizing him severely. But as yet they are not powerful enough to dislodge him from his position. During the second year of his incumbency, the superintendent continues to be harassed by these same enemies, who become increasingly bitter. Perhaps he becomes embroiled in something of a feud with them; in any case the opposition group becomes increasingly compact and well organized. The superintendent has by now acquired certain enemies on the school board and they serve in the community as further radiant points of antagonism toward him. But the important fact, and the inexorable tragedy of the superintendent's life is that in the second year he usually makes a few more enemies, but he rarely has an opportunity to restore the balance by making friends of those who have previously been inimical to him. At the end of the second year, the opposition is sufficiently powerful to "make a fight on the superintendent." Making a fight on the superintendent usually implies an open attempt to elect persons to the school board who will vote against his reelection; it implies a great deal of gossip and poisonous whispering, and, usually, conspiracies to discredit him in the eyes of the community. Not infrequently teachers become involved in these conspiracies. Let us say that the superintendent has given the community a satisfactory school and that he is able at the end of the second year to win the fight. Sometimes he is not, and the process, for him and the community, can begin again. But if he does win at the end of the second year, he stands a greater chance of losing at the end of the third, for his position is continuously weakened. He makes more enemies than friends. And he makes decided enemies, if not bitter enemies, and only lukewarm friends.

In the larger communities, the mass of the community is large enough to absorb without damage those individuals who have come into conflict with the superintendent over personal matters incidental to school administration or concerns of general school policy, so that his enemies will have less hope of removing him, and therefore less motivation to organize opposition to him. (His enemies are likely also to be scattered and without acquaintance with each other, which would make organization difficult.) Greater security of tenure is also assured in the larger communities by the very unwieldiness of the political machinery, which is so cumbrous that it is rarely set in motion for trivial reasons. Further, if the school executive

manages to remain in a smaller community for as long as, let us say, five years, he becomes pretty stable in his position, for he is then accepted as a member of the community and there is as little thought of discharging him because of disagreements concerning school policies as there is of running a farmer off his land because of his politics; he is a member of the local in-group, and he is something of a fixture; he has had time to develop firm and enthusiastic friends, and is not easily to be removed. We may, however, allow for all these exceptions without destroying the truth of our generalization, that the relationship of the school executive to the community has within it the elements of its own destruction. And as long as the traditional conception of the school, and the conception of school administration which goes with it, persists, and as long as the school continues to be controlled by the local community, the school systems of the smaller communities are doomed to frequent changes of head.⁴²

42. Willard Waller, The Sociology of Teaching, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (New York, 1932), pp. 93 - 102.

PART II

The Changing Conceptions of the Superintendency
in Public Education 1865-1966

In this part of the report I will concentrate on the conception schoolmen and others had about the nature of the superintendency--what they thought it was and what they thought it should be--and I will try to show how these conceptions changed and why they have changed in the last century.

I chose 1865 as a starting point because before that time the office was not a prominent one (after all, the common school was not firmly established until about 1860). After 1865 the office emerges and becomes possibly the most crucial position in American education. My research so far indicates that there have been four major conceptions of the superintendency which I have tentatively labeled and classified into periods as follows: the first, from 1865 to 1910, in which leading superintendents saw themselves and others saw them as scholarly educational leaders; the second, from 1910 to 1930, in which the concept of the superintendent as a business manager or school executive was dominant; the third, from 1930 to 1954, in which the superintendent was seen as an educational statesman in a democratic school; and the fourth from 1954 to the present, in which the superintendent was seen as an applied social scientist.

In this analysis as in any attempt to classify and impose time periods upon historical events, it must be realized that there is bound to be overlap. Some men usually emerge who seem to anticipate a subsequent change in educational administration--men who represent a point of view which may not

become a dominant one for a decade or more later. And, of course, there are always those who hold a point of view which has been largely abandoned by articulate leaders in the field. Also, it should be noted that even among the leaders in any of the four periods there are important differences. Nevertheless, even with these qualifications I will contend that there are in each of these periods dominant conceptions of the role of the school administrator, the kind of person he should be and the kind of training he should have.

I said that I was concerned with the question of why conceptions of the superintendency changed. I will contend that sometimes the major thrust for change has come from outside the profession and sometimes from within. Actually, the changes have always been a result of both forces--it is simply a matter of which is strongest in a particular period. My analysis is based on what leading superintendents wrote about the job and what they wrote (or sometimes equally important, what they did not write) about education, teachers, and the schools, and, to some extent, on what they did.

The Superintendent As A Scholarly Educational Leader

The first period in which the city superintendent of schools is clearly identifiable as a force in American education begins about the time of the Civil War. In this period, which I would say ended in 1910, the chief school administrators saw themselves, and others saw them, as scholarly educational leaders and, depending on the man, to some extent as philosophers. More specifically, they saw themselves as students of education and as teachers of teachers and as educational leaders in the community. When they talked about the job, as they frequently did in journals and in professional meetings, they

generally stressed the educational position and not the business or public relations position, although there were some men who, even in these early years, argued that the superintendent needed to give attention to the business and public relations side in order to survive. In the pages that follow I will provide evidence to support these statements.

In the early years and indeed until 1900, the most prominent superintendent was William Torrey Harris. Trained in the classical tradition at Yale, Harris wrote and spoke on a wide variety of topics from art to philosophy to elementary education. A man who was widely acclaimed as a leader in philosophy as well as education, Harris saw the task of the superintendent as follows:

The efficient superintendent sets into working order three educative influences to support the one great work of education in the school system: namely, an educative influence in wise measures and correct insight, for the members of the school board; second, an educative influence resulting in insight into methods, and a growth in personal self-control, and besides these a culture in literature and art and science, for the teachers; thirdly, for the community, an enlightened public opinion which knows what the schools are actually doing and can intelligently explain merits and defects, and tell what changes are desirable for onward progress.¹

Another prominent individual I would present in this period is William H. Maxwell, superintendent of schools in Brooklyn from 1887 to 1898 and for the entire New York system from 1898-1915. He was president of the Department of Superintendence, a member of the Conference on English of the Committee of Ten, Chairman of the Committee of Fifteen and for many years he was associate editor of the Educational Review--one of the finest educational journals ever published in this country. Although Maxwell did not write

1. "City School Supervision," Educational Review, Vol. 3 (February, 1892), p. 172.

specifically on his concept of the superintendency, his writing does show him to be a scholarly educational leader. Nicholas Murray Butler, who worked closely with him for years, after listing the academic honors Maxwell had won as an undergraduate and graduate student states that he "never abated his scholarly habits, and his extensive reading, study, and writing contributed as much as his distinguished public career toward winning the honorary degrees of doctor of laws granted by Columbia University in 1901."² Equally important, Maxwell thought the most important qualification for teaching was scholarship. As he put it, "Ignorance is at the root of most of our bad teaching."³

Another prominent person who will serve as an example of the scholar-educator type is John D. Philbrick, superintendent of the Boston schools from 1856 to 1885. Upon his death in 1896 the editor of the Journal of Education wrote a testimonial to him which provides evidence of his qualities and of his achievements.

Henry Barnard was the only American of his time who attained an equal reputation as an exact scholar and professional expert in education. In Japan, Spain, Russia, Austria, Belgium, England, and Scotland Mr. Philbrick was recognized as an educational leader of international rank. He represented Massachusetts at the Vienna Exposition (1873) and the United States government at the Paris Exposition (1878). In both cases the exhibit which he had in charge carried off the honors--Massachusetts at Vienna, and the United States at Paris. In the latter he secured for our exhibits 121 awards, more than any other nation except France. Of these, twenty-eight were gold medals. The French government created him a "Chevalier of Honor" and an "Officer of Public Instruction," with the insignia of gold palm and title "Officer of the Academy." The ancient and venerable University of St. Andrews in Scotland gave him the degree of Doctor of Laws, "holding in high regard the high merits of Mr. Philbrick's work in the sphere of education." The Belgian inspector of schools reported officially that he learned more from Mr. Philbrick than from all other sources.⁴

2. Educational Review, Vol. 27 (January, 1904), p. 5.

3. "Supervision of City Schools," N.E.A. Proceedings, 1894, p. 316.

4. Journal of Education, Vol. XLIV, No. 18, pp. 312 & 313.

Thomas M. Balliot was another prominent educator who wrote about the conception of the superintendency. Balliot was superintendent of schools in Springfield, Massachusetts for many years. These were his views in 1891:

As it is the first business of the lawyer to know law, and of the physician to know medicine, so it will soon be recognized that the first business of the superintendent of schools and of the principal of a normal school to know that which he is supposed to direct or teach--education.

He ought to be above all things else a teacher of pedagogics, a teacher of teachers.

The superintendent ought to be the educational advisor of the board and his counsel ought to command the same respect on their part as that of the city solicitor on a question of law, or that of the city physician on a question of sanitation on public health.

The superintendent ought also to make it his duty to fashion and shape the educational thought of the community.

It is quite true that in many communities the superintendent must take an active interest in the matter of school house architecture, in the management of financial affairs of the schools, and in various other matters important to the schools; but he is never justified in allowing his time and strength to be absorbed in these directions to the extent of rendering it impossible for him to either carefully study educational questions or teach his teachers pedagogics.⁵

Lewis Jones, superintendent at Indianapolis and at Cleveland, and a person extremely prominent (as has been shown already in this report) also provides us with evidence on the concept of the superintendency which was prominent before the turn of the century. In his article in the Atlantic Monthly in June of 1896 in which he was primarily concerned with the harmful effects of politics in education, he did discuss the qualities of the men who had preceded him at Indianapolis. Each of these men, he said, had

5. "City School Supervision," Educational Review, Vol. 2, (December 1891), pp. 483-484.

in his own way been "leaders in pedagogical thought and practice."⁶ The first superintendent he described in part as "a born executive, a capable leader of teachers but never a teacher of teachers. He had educational ideals but he could not teach these directly to his teachers."⁷ The man who succeeded him, however, was not only "a scholarly, thoughtful man but also a true teacher of teachers."⁸ The third superintendent, and Jones' predecessor, he described as a person who "brought to the work organizing power of a high order, connected with scholarly habits."⁹ These were his views about some other superintendents he had known. In his own work, and this comes out clearly in his annual reports, he gave evidence that the "scholarly educator" label described him perfectly.

I could present additional evidence of the views of superintendents themselves, but that is really unnecessary. I can sum up the case by presenting the views of one student of the period, H. Warren Button, who has drawn a composite portrait of them. He describes them as follows:

If they thought of the status of their positions, they compared themselves to attorneys, ministers or doctors. They felt that they were required to be scholars, and the most prominent of them were authors at one time or another. Frequently they wrote school texts or books on teaching methods, but they often worked in other fields; history of education, philosophy, history. The superintendents were professional men from the start, "experienced and learned men," as Taylor had said. He was a professional man before there was any

6. "The Politician and the Public School," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 77, (June 1896), p. 816.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 817.

body of professional knowledge or skill. Whatever else, he was not a business man--the thought never entered his mind.¹⁰

This last statement was not quite correct. These men did have to think about their role as a business manager, especially after 1890. But when they confronted the problem, they resolved it by having the business aspects of administration handled either by the Board or by a subordinate official--the superintendent would be an educator. This was the position recommended by the Draper Report and it was generally agreed upon in this early period. I think Burke Hinsdale, prominent superintendent and then college professor, represented the views of most of them when he said:

. . . let us consider the question what the norm or type of school superintendent should be. Hitherto the superintendent has combined many vocations and performed many duties. This is the case at the present time also. Some superintendents attend more to the educational side, and some more to the business or administrative side of the work, and no doubt this will be true to some extent in time to come, and there is no reason why it should not be so. Still the question occurs: In what direction shall the main stream or tide set? Should the superintendent be more of a leader of his teachers and of the community in respect to educational matters, or should he be more of a businessman or administrator? Those who are familiar with my ways of thinking on these subjects will not expect me to hesitate in deciding for the first of these courses.¹¹

There was one prominent exception to this view of the superintendency and that was held and advocated by Aaron Gove, the highly successful and prominent superintendent at Denver. I have already included his statement in his 1900 speech that neither scholarship nor executive ability was enough for success, and that what was needed was the ability to manipulate the school board and the public. In several earlier statements Gove made his views

10. A History of Supervision In the Public Schools, 1870-1950. An unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., 1961, pp. 25-26.

11. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1896, p. 470.

quite clear. Writing in 1891 he said:

It is not enough that the superintendent be an educational philosopher; he would often better be less of a theorist in principles and their application, and more of a practical business man.¹²

Then in a discussion in 1896 he said this:

City superintendents occupy a middle ground. On the one hand are the experts, philosophers, and thinkers, whose theories must precede any healthful progress. On the other hand are the people who make up the mass of the active forces of the community; ever ready and willing to trust to the philosophers, the men of thought among them, for the underlying principles of their educational system, and both unwilling to investigate and unable to appreciate, philosophical methods. Between the two are the superintendents; men who are giving their lives to the study of the practical side of this great interest; men who should be well aware of the business demands of the schools in their charge, and the money needed from year to year to maintain them.

Occupying this middle ground it is the superintendent's privilege to appropriate from the one side that wisdom, skill, and art which he learns from the students, and professors of pedagogical science; and from the other side those grosser, more material forces without which progress is hindered.¹³

As the years passed it became clear that Gove was right and by 1925 it would be a rare superintendent who would see himself as a scholarly type. But in the years before 1900 the scholarly-educator conception prevailed. I have given evidence from superintendents themselves. Now a look at the way others saw them. In 1898 Charles Thwing, President of Western Reserve, wrote an article on the superintendency which he described as "a new profession." Thwing was extremely optimistic about the possibilities of the new "profession" which he thought would have "a mighty part in the develop-

12. "City School Supervision," Educational Review, op. cit., p. 258.

13. N.E.A. Proceedings, op. cit., pp. 468-469.

ment of American life." His description of the kind of men he thought would be suitable for the job indicates that he was really thinking of a superman type, but the description does show that he thought of the superintendent in large part as an educated-scholarly type.

When one attempts to describe the sort of a man fitted to be the superintendent of schools in a town or a village, one discovers that the superintendent is to embody all that is excellent and highest. He is to be a man 'of light and leading.' He is to be a man of character, a gentleman of good manners, and a scholar. To the pupils he represents those qualities the securing of which is the end of the school. To the teachers he should embody those worthiest elements which they constantly hold up in their own personalities to their classes. If he must have the defects of his excellences, he is indeed to possess the excellences of his defects. He is to have an educational policy, but he is to hold it in determination free from stubbornness. He is to have a financial policy; he is to determine the amount of money to be given to the different grades of the schools and to the different teachers, but he is to be economical without parsimony, and to be liberal without lavishness. He is to be a scholar or, what is more important, he is to know scholarship and to know scholars, but he is also to know and to be impressed with the fact that in the public schools scholarship is a method or a means to the primary end of securing character and social education. He is to be an administrator and an executive, but he should not require a long experience to learn that social and personal relations are of the highest worth in securing worthiest results in educational service. He is to find his work in the school, but he is to remember that he is a citizen, and that he has fellow-citizens, and that with them he is to be on terms of good-fellowship. He may think himself set apart to a work of peculiar sacredness, but he will often be called to recognize that he himself and the whole system, of which he is the head, rest upon the great foundation of the welfare of the whole people. He may think of his work as entirely intellectual and spiritual, but on numerous occasions he is required to remember that the support of his work is found in the public taxes. A part of his work will have to be done at his own desk in solitary reflection on the conditions intrusted to his keeping, but he will also often hold conferences with his associates and be summoned to give counsel, and to offer guidance, in emergencies of peculiar peril. He will be summoned to point out to the citizens, in either writing or speaking, the duties which they owe to the children of their city. He is to be past; he is to be aggressive without being radical; he is to recognize the good of the past, yet not be chained to the past;

he is to be aggressive without being radical; he is to be a man of large heart, but he is not to let his sympathies control his judgment. He is to be able to say or do hard things when they ought to be said or done, but he is to do and to say as to leave in the one whom he may criticise or oppose a friend and a supporter. He is so to deal with the faults of the pupils as to cause them to correct them with the foibles of the teachers as to cause them to remove them, and with the limitations of school boards as to ¹⁴ inspire in the members largeness of view and vitality of service.

This conception of the job could be regarded as unrealistic since few if any human beings had the qualities Thwing expected. Yet considering the difficulty of the job, maybe he was right. Interestingly, this concept of the superintendency as a new profession, together with the almost heroic qualities that were thought necessary for the job, were adopted by Eliwood Cubberly and featured in his 1916 textbook on school administration.

I have two important pieces of evidence which indicate how some lay persons saw the job. The first is an editorial in The Binghamton (N.Y.) Republican in the autumn of 1896 in which the editor described the qualities he expected in a new superintendent.

The superintendent of schools in a city of the size and intelligence of Binghamton should set the standard of intellectual ardor for his teachers: he should be a distinct and vital influence for higher ideals, for unflagging zeal in the pursuit of those ideals; his enthusiasm should be of that carrying quality which communicates itself. He should be a man of liberal education; if not a scholar (in the scholar's use of the term), he should be at least a diligent student; and the scholarship will come when time places upon his head what the Scriptures declare is a crown of glory. He should know and love books; and yet know that one real teacher is worth more than a ton of textbooks. He should know the trend and the drift of what is called theory or modern education, or pedagogics. He should know and work out for himself the first principles of education. He should be an original investigator of principles and methods. He should learn all that Pestalozzi, Herbart, Froebel, Herbert Spencer, and Sir James Sully can teach him--and then be his own

14. Educational Review, Vol. 15, pp. 28-29.

man and nobody's copyist. He ought to know enough to know that, stripped of its technical vocabulary and somewhat pompous phrasing, "scientific" education is simply a return to the simplicity of teaching; a return to the etymological meaning of the word "education." He should work out for himself the difference between the old scholastic theory that education is a memorizing, a pouring-in of facts, statistics, tables, and the modern and yet very old theory that education is a drawing out, a bringing forth, a development. He should have experimental as well as theoretical knowledge of psychology. Although not a specialist, he should possess sufficient intelligence to detect poor work or to appreciate good work in any subject in any school.

But, above all else, his intellectual personality should be of that quality to inspire the great body of teachers to finer work, to more exacting ideals.¹⁵

This editorial was presented in the Journal of Education together with the name of the man who had been selected. The Journal editor commented that the new man was "a very strong man, but even he may hesitate to face
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these conditions in their entirety."

There is one other major piece of evidence that I will use to show how the office of the superintendent was seen prior to 1900. In 1896 apparently New York City had undergone a political expansion and that action created a need for a new superintendent. In June of 1896 William Bruce, editor of the American School Board Journal, described the situation and the man New York was seeking as follows:

Now that a Greater New York has been called into existence a greater superintendent is wanted. John Jasper, who has served as the manager of New York City's school system, with the title of city superintendent of schools, is thought to be too common place to continue in that position. Professor Daniel Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins College, has been urged to accept the superintendency. The contest has not only become a lively, but most interesting one.

15. Journal of Education, Vol. XLIV, op. cit., p. 308.

16. Ibid.

Mr. Jasper, in the language of a board member, has efficiency in a certain direction in the management of school matters that those most opposed to his reappointment as superintendent will concede. He has a marvelous familiarity with all the details of the school system; he knows the records and services of an immense number of teachers, and in his way he is a good administrator.

At the same time a majority of the members of the board of education would frankly admit, if they gave utterance to their convictions, that while Mr. Jasper has been paying great attention to administrative detail during the past sixteen years, he has allowed himself to slip behind in knowledge of improved methods of teaching. . .

For the office of superintendent a broad-minded scholar, who is versed in the most modern methods of imparting elementary education to nearly 200,000 children is wanted; a man who can inspire the teachers of these pupils with progressive ideas, who can lift up and carry along with him the whole body of assistant superintendents, principals and subordinate teachers in his efforts to give point, force, and direction to the objects for the attainment of which teaching is merely the means to an end...

The problem for the board of education to solve is obvious. On the one hand it has an excellent man, who is a thorough master of the details of his office, and on the other an educational leader of national reputation. The position of a school superintendent requires a man of great talent in opposite directions. Such a man is rarely found. Professor Gilman promises to be this man.¹⁷

The fact is that in 1896 one of the most distinguished scholars in the country was considered for the job of superintendent of schools in a great city and Gilman evidently seriously considered taking the job. That could not have happened in 1925 and it certainly would not have happened in 1965.

The Superintendent As Business Executive 1910-1929

Beginning about 1900 the conception of the role of the chief admini-

17. American School Board Journal, Vol. XI, No. 6, (June, 1896), p. 8 & 9.

(Italics mine).

strator of the schools began to change. This change occurred not because of any change in the nature of the work of the teacher, nor because of any basic changes in the purpose of the school. Rather, the change was a direct result of the impact of powerful social forces on the one side, and the institutional weakness of educators, and especially the superintendent, in the public schools on the other.

I have presented a detailed account of these social forces and time¹⁸ does not permit lengthy treatment here. The major elements were the rise to a position of great prestige of the businessman and the increasing acceptance by Americans of the business ideology. This latter development is certainly understandable for a generation raised on the McGuffey reader and the success story literature. Another factor was the climate of suspicion created by the muckraking journalists and indeed the development of muckraking journalism itself. These factors were blended together and reinforced by the reformers as they proposed to solve many, if not most, of the country's problems by applying something called "modern business methods."

By 1910, after years of subjection to the steadily growing business influence and about the time that the momentum of reform had reached its peak and Americans had become accustomed to a critical view of all their institutions, the schools, especially in the larger cities, were facing problems that would have taxed a professionally excellent, richly endowed, educational system. No such system existed, and the schools and teachers available were overwhelmed by the new problems which developed. Some fourteen million immigrants had come to America between 1865 and 1900.

18. Raymond E. Callahan, Education and the Cult of Efficiency, (Chicago: 1962).

After 1900, they came at a rate of about one million per year. The majority of these people remained in the eastern cities where their children were entered--with increasing frequency because of the improvements in child labor laws and compulsory attendance legislation--into the public schools. Coming predominantly from the poorest socio-economic groups in southern and eastern Europe, these uprooted, non-English speaking children from semiliterate families with diverse cultural backgrounds constituted an educational problem unparalleled in human history.

On the physical side alone, this meant that thousands of additional classrooms and teachers were needed. Even without the flood of immigration, greater expenditures for education had become necessary due to the normal increase in population and the increasing responsibilities placed upon the schools. With the vast numbers of new students, taxes had to be raised greatly to meet even the minimum essentials. Unfortunately, this need for large increases in school funds occurred not only at a time when the country had been roused to a concern for economy and conditioned to suspect that all public institutions were inefficient and wasteful, but also in an inflationary period in which the cost of living had risen more than 30 percent. The result was that administrators, who needed additional funds, were forced to deal with a suspicious, economy-minded public which wanted to cut costs.

It is against this background of social and educational conditions that an event must be seen which was to have far-reaching consequences for education administration. This was the spectacular entrance, in the autumn of 1910, of Frederick Taylor and his system of scientific management on the American scene. In the months and years that followed, the country was

saturated with hundreds of articles, and scores of books were written on scientific management and efficiency. As a result, the country became even more efficiency conscious. Demands were made that Taylor's system be applied to education and these were always coupled with statements concerning the financial savings which would be forthcoming.

The publicity given to the scientific management movement, and the great claims made in its behalf, intensified the feeling on the part of the public that great waste existed everywhere, and at the same time offered a means of eliminating it. One result was that a new wave of criticism was directed against many institutions, and especially those which were large enough to be suspected of gross managerial inefficiency and those which were supported by public taxation. The schools, particularly in the larger cities, met both of these criteria. Beginning early in 1911, hardly a month passed for two years in which articles complaining about the schools were not published either in the popular or in the professional journals. Gradually the criticism grew in volume, reaching a peak in the summer and fall of 1912. In these months a series of incendiary articles were published in two of the popular journals with tremendous circulations, The Saturday Evening Post and The Ladies Home Journal.¹⁹ In June of 1913, the editor of the American School Board Journal reported that "No recent year has seen such wholesale changes in superintendencies and other higher school positions as the present year-- 1913. In the Middle-west there has been a perfect storm of unrest culminating in wholesale resignations, dismissals and new appointments."²⁰

19. Ibid. Chapter 3.

20. American School Board Journal, Vol. XLVI, p. 28.

So far as the conception of the nature of administration, and especially the superintendency, was concerned, there is evidence of change away from the notion of the administrator as scholarly-educator or at least as a teacher of teachers over to a business-managerial role, even before the efficiency mania hit the country late in 1910. This change is evident in the professional meetings, in the journals, and in the major books on administration by W. E. Chancellor in 1904 and 1908.²¹ This was probably a natural result of the rapid growth of city school systems into mass organizations, the growing admiration for the managers of large business and industry, and the increasing tendency to apply business concepts to all areas of human experience. Even so, Chancellor does at times refer to the superintendent as a scholar and at one point writes that his relationship to the school board "stands somewhat as an attorney to a client."²² And Dutton and Snedden in their text, which was published in 1908 and along with Chancellor's the most important book on educational administration before 1910, present the superintendent as an educational leader and statesman who needed above all²³ a broad liberal and professional education.

The clash between the old and the new concepts of administration was brought to the attention of educators in March of 1910. The occasion was a meeting of the National Society of College Teachers of Education. The

21. W. E. Chancellor, Our Schools: Their Administration & Supervision. Boston: (1904); Our City Schools: Their Direction & Management. (Boston; 1908).

22. Our Schools, Ibid., p. 10

23. S. T. Dutton and D. Snedden, The Administration of Public Education in the United States. Chapter 14, New York.

meeting was devoted to a consideration of university study of educational administration. The main paper was read by Frank Spaulding, superintendent of schools in Newton, Massachusetts. Charging that the administration of public education was "grossly inefficient" and "the weakest phase of our great educational enterprise," he urged that the training of the administrator emphasize the practical aspects of the job and be based on "simple and sound business principles." Spaulding's paper was criticized by William Burris, dean of the College for Teachers of the University of Cincinnati, who argued that the administrator of the highest type was "first of all a philosopher."²⁴

In the years immediately following, educators were forced to devote a great deal of attention to administration, and not only courses but whole programs were developed in that field in the universities. On the question of what the nature of these courses would be, the issue was decided in Spaulding's favor, and not by the logic of his argument but by the course of events. The American people, stirred by the sensationalist criticism in the popular magazines and convinced that the schools were grossly inefficient (many leading educators had boarded the critics' bandwagon), demanded administrators who advocated separating the business aspects of administration from the educational. These men, he said, "give evidence of about as sound and comprehensive a grasp of the real problems of educational administration as the would-be manufacturer of shoes must have of industry

24. F. E. Spaulding, The Aims, Scope, and Method of a University Course in Public School Administration, (Iowa City, 1910), pp. 3-26 & p. 72.

25. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1913, pp. 249-297.

who would put his factory in charge of two independent experts . . . "26

Whatever harmful educational consequences ensued from Spaulding's practices (and questions of this point were brushed aside), his conception of administration and his recommendations for practice made sense to men who were trying to keep their jobs. Superintendents who adopted his suggestions were able to reduce education to financial terms and to meet their economy-minded critics on their own ground. At the same time, by giving to the work of the administrator the appearance of scientific respectability, Spaulding not only contributed to an improved status for the administrator, but also provided him with a professional rationalization for an over-emphasis upon the financial aspects of education. And if there were any who doubted the effectiveness of Spaulding's approach, he could use his own successful career to dispel these doubts. He had kept his job at Newton, which had the reputation of being the "burial ground of superintendents,"²⁷ for ten years at a salary of \$4,000. Only the superintendency at Boston paid more in Massachusetts. In 1914 he was appointed superintendent at²⁸ Minneapolis at \$8,000 per year. Three years later he moved to Cleveland²⁹ at \$12,000.

The other major effort to change educational administration over to the business-industrial model was made by John Franklin Bobbitt in the Twelfth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. In

26. Ibid.

27. F. E. Spaulding, School Superintendents in Action in Five Cities. (West Rindge, N.H., 1955) pp. 222-223.

28. Ibid., p. 382.

29. American School Board Journal, Vol. LIV, (February, 1917), p. 61.

this volume, published early in 1913, Bobbitt applied some of the major elements of Taylor's system of management, which had been dramatically introduced to the public in 1910, to the schools. He recommended that all major decisions be made by management; the setting of standards for the "product"; the determination of the task to be performed and the incentive (salary) to be provided; the determination of methods of instruction, together with detailed instruction for the use of the "workers"; the selection and training of the "workers"; and the selection of tools and appliances to be used. Like Taylor, Bobbitt believed that efficiency depended on "centralization of authority and definite direction by the supervisors of all processes performed." Both systems reduced the "workers" to automats and placed heavy responsibility for "production" on management.

The evidence from the professional journals shows that it was Spaulding's ideas, not Bobbitt's, which were accepted by most of the men who wrote on educational administration after 1913. The reasons for this are rather obvious. His ideas were easy to apply and they got the job done, i.e., economy was achieved and the schools had the appearance of being run efficiently. Bobbitt's system required an elaborate and expensive research and planning division. Even the largest school systems had neither the money nor the talent for such an operation. Besides, the public was not primarily concerned with real efficiency (even if we grant that Bobbitt's system would have produced it), but with cost.

By 1915 the great change in educational administration was well under way and in the next decade the basic patterns were extended and institution-

30. For a detailed description and analysis of Bobbitt's views see Callahan, op. cit., Chapter 4.

alized through the development of graduate programs in administration. The two men who led in this development were Ellwood Cubberley, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford, and George Strayer, Professor of Educational Administration at Teachers College, Columbia. Cubberley's major influence was exerted through his texts, especially his Public School Administration published in 1916, while Strayer's influence was exerted through his teaching and research direction at Teachers College, and through the many major surveys which he directed.

Cubberley's conception of administration, as presented in his 1916 textbook, is an interesting combination of the ideas of Chancellor, Dutton and Snedden, Spaulding and Bobbitt. The superintendent is pictured as heroic, almost superhuman. His is the office "up to which and down from which authority, direction, and inspiration flow." He is "the organizer and director of the work of the schools in all their different phases, ..." He is "the executive officer of the school board, and also its eyes, and ears, and brains." He is "the supervisor of the instruction in the schools, and also the leader, adviser, inspirer, and friend of the teachers." On the other hand little attention is given to the teachers, and this is directed to the mechanical aspects of their selection and management by the supervisory staff. In some respects Cubberley's system of administration can be described as benevolent authoritarianism. His superintendent is not a scholar or a philosopher, but neither is he Bobbitt's engineer or Spaulding's cost accountant, although much of his text is devoted to the financial

31. Ellwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration. (Boston, 1916), p. 132.

and mechanical aspects of education. He is rather an executive, a director of large enterprises, one might almost say a captain of education. As he is described by Cubberley he would be almost identical, trait by trait, with the paragons of virtue, energy, and ability, who constituted the ideal "successful" man in the success-story literature.

In the 1920's, probably the most influential figure in the development of administration was George Strayer, the leader in educational administration at the institution which awarded more advanced degrees in administration than all the other graduate schools in the country between 1910 and 1930. He was the first to apply Thorndike's basic statistical techniques to the work of educational administration and he sought to achieve for his graduate program the professional respectability of medicine and law.

There were several factors responsible for this development. Most important was Strayer's conception of the nature of professional training and the translation of this conception into a program for preparing school administrators. Strayer believed, along with Spaulding and his Dean at Teachers College, James E. Russell, that professional training should provide the student with the specific skills he needed to do the job. And this emphasis upon the specific and immediate tasks was carried to the doctoral dissertation as Strayer contended that "there is no detail of the work of the administrator that may not properly become the subject of intensive investigation by those who are candidates for the doctor's degree in the professional school."³² The result was an emphasis upon the tech-

32. George D. Strayer, N. L. Engelhardt, & others, Problems in Educational Administration, (New York, 1925), p. VIII.

niques and the mechanics of administration. While this kind of program did not require extensive study in the disciplines, upon which a real understanding of education must be based, and was not oriented toward basic inquiry and the production of knowledge, it did provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate the schools in a business-like way--a prerequisite for job survival in most school districts in the twenties.

Taken together, the leaders in this period--Spaulding, Bobbitt, Cubberley, and Strayer--represented a new type of school administrator, a type that differed markedly from men such as Harris or Maxwell. To a man, they were able, energetic, and practical, and to an amazing degree they represented in their interests and actions the dominant tendencies in American life in the first decades of the twentieth century. They not only manifested a great interest in, and admiration for, businessmen and industrialists, but they resembled these men in their behavior. They were active in introducing and using business and industrial procedures and terminology in education, and they centered their attention almost exclusively upon the financial, organizational, and mechanical problems. Because they were capable men, they would have achieved a measure of success in almost any kind of activity at any period in American history. Their attainment of positions of great leadership in education was due in part to the fact that the kind of ability and orientation they had was precisely the kind that was sought after in an efficiency-conscious, business society. The situation in American education after 1911 demanded leaders who were oriented toward the business side of education, not the social or philosophical side.

The Superintendent as Educational Statesman in
Democratic Schools 1930-1954

In the years after 1930 the business-managerial orientation in administration came under vigorous attack, gradually declined in prominence and was replaced by the notion of the superintendent as an educational leader operating within the democratic framework. By decline I mean that leaders in school administration either rejected it outright or modified it so that the business and managerial aspects of administration were relegated to an important but secondary place. At least this was true at the verbal level as evidenced by the writings of leaders in administration. Whether it was true generally among superintendents or professors of educational administration is difficult to say. I am sure that many administrators not only accepted the new ideas but also tried to implement them. But there is reason enough to suspect that the new concept was accepted by many, if not most, superintendents only at the verbal level. For whatever lofty statements might be made about the superintendent as an educational statesman or however disenchanted the nation might be with the leaders in the business community, administrators knew that their most difficult task was to get enough money from an economy-minded public (using obsolete financial arrangements) to run the school effectively and at the same time give the appearance of frugality. No, whatever critics might say, the business-managerial orientation and training was functional. It was functional in 1910, functional in 1930, and there is evidence that it is functional in 1966. Besides, hundreds of men had been trained in the crucial years (crucial in terms of the growth of graduate schools of education)

between 1910 and 1930. These men went not only into important superintendencies, but also into faculty and administration positions in schools of education where they trained another generation of students in the manner in which they had been trained. It isn't easy to make an educational statesman out of a man trained as a cost accountant. On the other hand, whatever the realities of life were, the most business-minded superintendent must have been stirred by the possibility of being perceived as an "educational statesman"--whatever that meant it sounded good. At the same time it would have been difficult for a superintendent to decline to accept the role of "democratic educational leader."

The leader in the movement to establish a new conception of the superintendency was Jesse H. Newlon--and he was perfect for the job. He was not only a man of great ability and courage, but he was a rare combination of scholar and successful practitioner. He could and did hold his own in a company of outstanding scholars that included John Dewey, George Counts, John Childs, and Charles Beard. More important, from the point of view of having his ideas listened to with respect and perhaps accepted by a field of practical men, was his background and experience. He came from a small town in the midwest and he had risen to the top. He was successively a teacher of history, a high school principal, a superintendent of schools at Lincoln, Nebraska, and then at Denver, and finally a professor of education at the most important school in professional education--Teachers College, Columbia. He had received national recognition for his work as superintendent at Denver and in 1925 was elected president of the N.E.A. As one prominent professor of educational administration put it, "No man can justly

say that Dr. Newlon's thinking has not been tested both in the crucible of theory and under the withering fire of practice. He can neither be characterized as an "educational up-start" nor as a "visionary college professor."³³

Newlon launched his criticism and presented his views on the superintendency before a national audience of administrators in 1925--a time when the business-managerial conception of administration had reached its peak. He worried that "the greatest danger that besets superintendents at the present time is that they will become merely business managers." Many superintendents, he said, were "more concerned about the purchase of pencils and paper, about the employment of janitors and clerks, about mere business routine than they are about the educative process that goes on in the classroom." Such individuals, he said, "would make good bookkeepers."³⁴

Newlon stated that the chief function of the superintendent was "educational leadership"; and this leadership would be exerted within a democratic framework which would make it possible for teachers to participate "in the study of educational problems and in the development of methods of procedure." The authoritarian conception of administration, so closely linked to the business-managerial concept, had to go. Teachers would participate with administrators as associates. But by this Newlon did not mean that the answers to educational problems would be obtained by

33. Frank W. Hart, The Social Frontier, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March, 1935), p. 29.

34. N.E.A. Proceedings, 1925, p. 658.

majority vote. The expert had his place. But he wanted superintendents to be "students of the social sciences" and to "draw constantly" on knowledge from these fields when confronting educational policies and problems. But he knew that neither superintendents nor teachers could be expert in every aspect of education. For this reason the superintendent should "appreciate and employ the services of those who are experts in the numerous fields of education."

These ideas are very impressive and would place Newlon at the forefront of educational administration in 1966. Considering the time at which they were presented and the climate of the times, they are remarkable. Even more remarkable was his view of the teaching staff. "I like to think of the teaching staff," he said, "as a company of scholars engaged in the education of youth."³⁵ Those were rare words in 1925. They are almost as rare in 1966.

The major outline of Newlon's conception of the superintendency was presented in 1925. But it was almost a decade before his ideas had a major impact upon educational administration, and even then two important events made it possible. The first was his appointment in 1927 to the faculty of Teachers College. This appointment gave him great prestige and a national platform. It also thrust him into the midst of what was probably the most able and stimulating group of professional educators ever assembled. The second event was the great depression. Shattering in its impact and threatening the very existence of the free society, it forced educators into a

35. Ibid., p. 660.

searching reappraisal of their educational practices and programs. In the process it was clear that America could not afford to have its leaders in the field, the superintendents, trained and operating as clerks and business managers.

Newlon was not alone, of course. Most of the leading Progressives, including Dewey, contributed in the movement as did other outstanding men such as William Bagley (who had been critical since 1920) and Isaac Kandell. But Newlon led the way both in criticism and in reconstruction. He did this through his teaching, his speaking, and especially his writing. He was editor of the School Executive Magazine during the thirties and through this journal wrote directly to administrators and school board members. His major effort, however, was his influential book Educational Administration as Social Policy, which one leading administrator described as the most significant and potent book on administration in "modern times."³⁶ In this book Newlon elaborated and documented his assertions concerning the narrowness of the superintendent's training and the meagerness of his educational background. He also spelled out his program for training and his conception of democratic educational leadership which he had presented in 1925.³⁷

By the mid-thirties, the evidence of the changes in thinking regarding the superintendency is abundant. The 1933 Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence was entitled Educational Leadership: Progress and Possibilities and was dedicated to William T. Harris as a "practical school

36. Frank W. Hart, op. cit., p. 30.

37. Educational Administration as Social Policy, (New York, 1934), Chapter XI.

men who illuminated the everyday problems of administration with the light of a social philosophy." The 1935 Yearbook was devoted to Social Change in Education and the 1937 edition to The Improvement of Education: Its Interpretation for Democracy. And the programs of the meetings of the Department of Superintendence during these years reflect the change. At the 1937 meeting Newlon, Counts, Dewey, and Strayer spoke and the emphasis was on the superintendent as an educational statesman and on democratic administration. Even Strayer, while defending the achievements of the past, stressed the need for breadth of training in the social sciences and the need for the administrator to have a social and educational philosophy as a basis for providing educational leadership. The following year (1938) Strayer devoted two sections of a chapter on local school administration in an important Educational Policies Commission publication to the importance and necessity of having teachers participate in the formulation of school programs and in the development of educational policy--the essence of "democratic administration."

In 1942 the National Society for the Study of Education decided to devote a Yearbook to administration. The volume, which was published in 1946 with the title Changing Conceptions in Educational Administration, provides additional evidence of change. The first chapter was written by Grayson Kefauver of Stanford and entitled "Reorientation of Educational Administration." There are four sections in the chapter. The first is "Educational Administration as Social Statesmanship," the second is "Leadership in Educational Administration," the third is "Educational Planning," and the fourth is "Democracy in Educational Administration." By 1950 one

of the leaders in administration stated that, although the old administrative practices were still being followed, "in the more progressive school systems
38
democracy in administration is practiced."

The democratic administration movement reached its peak in the decade after 1945 with numerous books and even more articles appearing explaining its nature and its operation. In these materials Newlon's emphasis on scholarship and on the social sciences is neglected, and the stress is on "creative dynamic democratic leadership" in school and community with everyone--teachers, pupils and parents--participating. Probably the movement's most influential spokesman in this period was Ernest Melby. He had been a teacher and superintendent and did his graduate work in educational administration at the University of Minnesota. He was awarded his Ph.D. in 1928 with a thesis in school finance. He served as Dean of the College of Education at Northwestern University from 1934-1941 and then as Dean at New York University in 1945. Melby's major work, Administering Community Education was published in 1955. The book is inspirational in tone and in it Melby argues for a concept of administration which will enable public education to meet the pressing problems of the time. He describes his conception of the superintendency as follows:

The concept of administration here set forth . . . rests on faith in men and faith in freedom. It recognizes the centrality of the community in strengthening the democratic process. It conceives of education as a process of creative living and of administration as creative leadership. It sees the entire community as an educational resource and seeks the development of conscious educational purposes on the part of every community. . .

38. Ward C. Reeder, A First Course in Education, (New York), p. 88.

The prime "know-how" of the administrator consists in knowing how to release the creative capacities of individuals and how to mobilize the educational resources of communities. Human beings grow best in an atmosphere of security, affection, and freedom; therefore, faith in people, love for them, and willingness to set them free are the most essential personal qualities of administrators.³⁹

There are two other very influential men whose views on administration need to be mentioned: they are Arthur Moehlman and Paul Mort. I see them both as transition figures who were trained in the business-managerial pattern but who attempted to incorporate some of the new concepts. Moehlman was a teacher and principal in the Detroit schools, was trained at the University of Michigan, and then became Professor of Administration there in 1923. His major work was his School Administration published in 1940. Moehlman states in his preface that instruction is the supreme purpose of the schools, that the teacher is the most important agent, and that the job of the administrator is to minister to the teachers' needs in order to increase the "efficiency of the teaching process." He is critical of the business-managerial emphasis in administration and he devotes his first two chapters (out of 37) to democracy and the purposes of education but the remainder of the work (almost 900 pages) deals with the financial, legal, and mechanical aspects of administration. He did not stress the importance of the social sciences in the training of administrators nor teacher participation in administration.

Mort served as a teacher, principal, and superintendent, then took his doctorate at Teachers College in 1924 and was immediately appointed to the faculty of that institution. He did his doctoral thesis on school

39. Administering Community Education, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1955), pp. 249-250.

finance and eventually gained national recognition for his work in that field. His major work on administration, Principles of School Administration, was published in 1946. Whereas Moehlman's conception of administration was more like the business-managerial model of the twenties, Mort's not only included many of the ideas of the democratic group, but was also much closer to the research and theory oriented conception of administration that emerged after 1954. For example he begins the Preface of his book with this statement:

As I have viewed various attempts to find solutions to administrative problems and tried my hand at some of them, I have found myself baffled by the lack of encompassing theory. No such theory has been at hand either as a basis for appraisal of the solutions of others or as a tool for illuminating the novel problems I myself have faced. It has seemed to me that the literature of our field has been piecemeal. To no small degree it is made up of rules of thumb collected from hither and yon. Such parts of it carry no hints as to their relative importance for the principles underlying them are not apparent. Other parts of the literature deal with sets of principles or theories encompassing only a phase of administration such as budgets, accounting, building planning, and curriculum development. No matter how internally consistent these special theories may be, they do not carry the stigmata that are the keys to relative emphasis. What I have felt the need of is a set of internally consistent principles covering the whole range of administration. This book is an attempt to meet that need.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Mort, more than any other person in administration in his time, tried to study some of the important problems of educational administration scientifically. It is true that his adaptability studies carried out in Pennsylvania would be labeled today by social scientists as dust-bowl empiricism which lacked a theoretical framework. But con-

40. Principles of School Administration, (New York, 1946) p. vii.

sidering his training and the state of research in the mid-thirties, his effort must be described as remarkable. Unfortunately, in his 1946 volume, in which he does discuss research and urges respect for evidence, he came close to advocating the rule of thumb practices he criticized in his Preface. Unfortunate also was his negative reaction to having administrators take work in the social sciences. His opinion was that such work was not "sufficiently definitive" to be of real help to practicing administrators. In 1946, maybe he was right.

The Superintendent as an Applied Social Scientist 1954-1966

Beginning after World War II while the concept of the superintendent as a democratic educational statesman was still dominant, forces were underway which were to undermine this concept, and it was replaced (after 1954 certainly) by a notion of the superintendent as a combination educational realist and applied social scientist. There is still great stress placed upon the superintendent as an educational leader, but it is a different kind of leadership.

In the period after 1954, the approach to educational leadership was more realistic and less idealistic. There was great stress placed upon analysing educational leadership--or finding out what it was rather than what it should be. In one prominent textbook the authors explained, "Leadership is defined in terms of leader behavior." And this behavior was seen as effective if the person was "getting the job done" (whatever it might be) and if he was "maintaining the solidarity of the group." The new educational leader was expected to contribute and even lead in the development

of "the democratic way of life" but would do this more as an applied social scientist than as an educational statesman. He would be a person who understood human beings and organizations and he would use this understanding to keep the organization running effectively. He would work with his group to help define and achieve "tasks, goals, and purposes" but these were not specified.⁴¹ Jesse Newlon would ask the new leaders in administration-- leadership for what?

In this development there were two major groups who reached something approaching agreement (among the leaders at least) on the kind of person the superintendent should be and the kind of training he needed, but they accepted and encouraged the change for different reasons. One group was a relatively small but increasingly influential group of professors of educational administration. The other group was the American Association of School Administrators who represented superintendents in the field. The professors were dissatisfied with the "democratic" conception on intellectual grounds. They regarded the leaders in the democratic camp as missionaries who were preaching an ideology and who were completely unrealistic about the job as it actually was.⁴² The leaders in the A.A.S.A. gradually came around to accept the new conception of the superintendency because the concept, with the kind of training it involved, worked--that is it provided a better basis for survival on the job.

41. E. L. Morphet, R. L. Johns and T. L. Reller, Educational Administration, Concepts, Practices, and Issues, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1959), p. 86.

42. For example, see the statement by Daniel Griffith and others in the Sixty-third Yearbook of the N.S.S.E., Behavioral Science and Educational Administration, (Chicago, 1964), pp. 1-2; and Campbell, Corbally and Ramseyer, Introduction to Educational Administration, (Boston, 1962), p. 72.

There were at least four major factors which contributed to the change or made it possible, and while all these factors influenced both the professors and the superintendents they did so in varying degrees and again for different reasons. The first reason was a dissatisfaction with the notion of "democratic administration." In the beginning, this discontent was not expressed forcibly. After all, it was difficult to oppose anything connected with democracy. In the later years the complaints were expressed openly until by 1962 it was clear that the concept had run its course. I think that most leaders in administration would have agreed with this judgment about democratic administration made by Andrew Halpin in 1958. In fact, this same quotation was used in the 1960 A.A.S.A. Yearbook.

You will note that this description of leadership omits any reference to "democratic" leadership. This is deliberate, for the notion of "democratic" leadership, as this idea has been applied in education, has degenerated into an empty slogan and has immobilized more leaders than it has liberated.

Yet we repeatedly encounter superintendents who fear to take a stand, who hesitate to initiate structure, lest they be accused of being anti-democratic. This is nonsense, for the superintendents who adopt this attitude eventually lose the respect of their staffs; teachers can quickly spot the phony who tries to hide his own ineptness in the soggy oatmeal of a pseudo group-process.⁴³

A second major factor closely related to the first was the rapid development of the social sciences during and after World War II. This development had resulted in an amazing accumulation of knowledge and a

43. "The Superintendent's Effectiveness as a Teacher," Administrator's Notebook, The Midwest Administration Center, the University of Chicago, Vol. III, October, 1958, No. 2, pp. 2-3.

good part of it was devoted to an analysis of organizations and to the administrative process. Fortunately for school administrators this knowledge was available just when they needed it. The evidence shows that the job of the superintendent was becoming more and more demanding--as apparently the American people took Melby's ideas seriously and expected more of their superintendents. One leader in the field, Professor Daniel Davies, made an analysis of the situation in the fall of 1951. Discussing the increasing complexity of the job, especially when the schools came under attack, he concluded that the job was impossible but if it was to be managed at all more knowledge was needed. He wrote, "So much of what we do is opportunistic response to the emergency of the moment or copied from other organizational fields such as the military, business and industry. Any good physical scientist has his theory or theories to guide him in research and decision making. But administrators are still, comparatively, operating at the alchemist stage."⁴⁴

Fortunately, this knowledge was now becoming available and some of the leaders among the professors of educational administration were eagerly applying it to their field, and leaders among the superintendents were hopeful that this knowledge would enable them to cope more adequately with their difficult job.

But neither dissatisfaction with the "democratic" conception nor the desire to apply knowledge from the social sciences to administration

44. "Expanding Responsibilities of Educational Administration," Teachers College Record, Vol. 53, No. 1, (October, 1951), p. 12.

was enough. A third major factor in the change in administration was the work of the Kellogg Foundation. Between 1950 and 1960 the Foundation spent more than seven million dollars on educational administration, most of it in grants to eight major universities. As a result of the Kellogg grants establishing the Cooperative Programs in Educational Administration, money was made available for faculty teaching and research, for graduate fellowships, for seminars and workshops, for the production of teaching materials, and for the support of experimental programs. For the first time at a few schools a small number of professors of education had the resources to really study their problems.

When they did two things happened: One, they became aware of the studies that had been carried out in the social sciences which were applicable to their field and two, they became aware of their own deficiencies in knowledge and in training. So they began, with Kellogg money, to bring outstanding social scientists (such as Jacob Getzels and Andrew Halpin) onto their faculties. With these sharp critical minds applied to the field the "democratic" conception was doomed. For the first time educational administrators had solid research studies to enable them to improve their practice.

The fourth major factor contributing to the change in the conception of the superintendency was a resurgence of criticism which hit the schools between 1950 and 1954. This development, of course, had much greater impact upon administrators in the field than it did on professors of educational administration. In this development we have a reenactment of the 1912-13 pattern of criticism and response. As I have pointed out,

because of our legal and institutional structure in education, our superintendents are extremely vulnerable to pressure. This vulnerability is always present and is a continuously operating factor in accounting for developments in public education. However, during periods of intensive criticism as in 1912-13 administrators respond more quickly to defend themselves and the probability of change is much greater. The period between 1950-54 was such a period. This is how the authors of the 1952 Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators described the situation:

School superintendents never appeared more expendable than at this mid-century. Dismissals and forced resignations were paralleled by an almost equal number of physical break-downs, sometimes fatal. Dismissals in large population centers received extensive news coverage; those in small communities were less widely reported. That superintendents served as hazardously in rural districts and in small population centers as in large seemed true on the basis of general observation.⁴⁵

The major event in this situation was the firing of superintendent Willard Goslin in Pasadena, California in 1950. Goslin was one of the most prominent superintendents in the country and had been president of the A.A.S.A. in 1949. The impact of his dismissal was felt in administrative circles around the country.

Why the upsurge of criticism in 1950? I think it was a combination of the societal hysteria produced by McCarthyism, and the financial difficulty caused by increasing enrollment, and the demand for expanded educational services.

45. The American School Superintendency, Thirtieth Yearbook of the American Association of School Administrators, 1952, p. 62.

In order to defend themselves the leaders in school administration responded in two ways. They urged superintendents to establish permanent citizens' committees and they recommended that they study what the social sciences had to offer. By 1955 there was abundant evidence these tactics were succeeding. In January of that year two prominent administrators and one layman provided testimony. The first was Francis Chase of the University of Chicago. Writing in a leading administrative journal, The School Executive, Chase reported on the changes in administration in the "past few months." He acknowledged that schoolmen faced serious problems but he was optimistic about the future. This optimism was due partly to the fact that administrators had weathered some serious storms, e.g., in Pasadena, and they now knew that the American people would "not sit idly by and see their schools weakened."⁴⁶ It was now clear (and this point is made again and again by leaders in administration) that no school board in a prominent community could arbitrarily fire a superintendent without cause as they had done in 1913 or in 1950. Superintendents had gotten support from enlightened sections of the public and they had learned and were learning how to marshall their resources to defend themselves. John Hersey, writing one of the articles in the same journal put it this way: "Citizens' groups are also learning that it is better to try to deal with a crisis of troublous ideas before, rather than after it comes to a head; the lesson of Pasadena has been learned."⁴⁷ Needless

46. "School Administration Today," The School Executive, (January, 1955,) p. 50.

47. "Citizens Activities," The School Executive, op. cit., p. 50.

to say alert superintendents were helping citizens' groups to learn this lesson and were active through their principals and teachers and P.T.A.'s in building a reserve of good will and potential support in their communities. As in 1913, school administrators were learning how to live with their vulnerability and survive in what one prominent layman described⁴⁸ in 1953 as "the most harassing and ulcer-producing job in public life."

Chase was optimistic too because administrators in 1955 had a better understanding of administration "as a process of influencing the behavior of persons in the direction of agreed-upon purposes or goals." Another factor responsible for his optimism was the "increasing application of research to administration." Chase then did what other leaders did frequently in these years in discussing the new development--he acknowledged the great role of the Kellogg programs and thereby linked progress⁴⁹ very closely with the "new administration."

Further evidence on both points was provided in the same 1955 issue of The School Executive by a person powerful and influential among practicing administrators--Finis E. Engleman, for years executive secretary of the American Association of School Administrators. In a brief, optimistic article Engleman reported that superintendents who had been made cautious by the "devastation" wrought by school critics had also been heartened by the "increased lay support throughout the nation." He also stated that "incidents" which had "proved fatal to the school program and

48. Henry Toy, Jr., in The School Executive, op. cit., p. 98. Toy at this time was director of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools.

49. The School Executive, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

even to the superintendent himself" were causing administrators to turn to the social sciences. "Hundreds of school executives," he said, "are studying their communities. From sociologists, social anthropologists, and political scientists they are trying to learn how to study, analyze and interpret the forces and institutions which play upon the school. They are concerned with knowing what makes a community tick."⁵⁰

I suppose that sooner or later leaders in school administration would have started drawing upon the knowledge and research procedures from the social sciences even if the events of the early fifties which I have described had not occurred. Their occurrence, however, speeded up the process considerably. The Kellogg money speeded the process in the universities and the strong criticism made superintendents willing and even eager to learn from the social sciences and to apply what they had learned.

My prediction is that the conception of the superintendent as an applied social scientist will be prevalent in American education in the foreseeable future. For professors of educational administration the application of knowledge and research procedures from the social sciences enables them to establish their work on a scholarly and perhaps a scientific basis with all the benefits, including academic respectability, which this will bring. And superintendents will become increasingly receptive to study in the social sciences because this knowledge will enable them to get and keep their jobs.

50. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

The more these men know about society and especially their own community and the more they know about human behavior the better they will be able to understand and control their own situation. I think this is all to the good. The danger I see is that superintendents will become high-level technicians expert at keeping their organization going but not equipped to see or understand where they are going. If this happens, we will have a recurrence of the 1910-1930 story at a higher level. Personally, I hope that administrators will use knowledge from the social sciences but not lose sight of the fact that they are the leaders in an educational enterprise and will therefore perceive themselves as educators. However, I think it will be difficult to achieve this end unless ways and means can be found of reducing the institutional vulnerability of our school superintendents.